TRECOTHICK BOWER;

OR, THE

LADY OF THE WEST COUNTRY.

Scroggie Major

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

REGINA MA[illegible]CHE

[illegible]OUSES OF

[illegible]LUMES;

VICAR O[illegible] &c.

By Sorrow's[illegible]
[illegible]no pow'[illegible]
[illegible]n'd, [illegible]
[illegible]akes
[illegible]
Endears, [illegible] whom Fate afflicts
Or Fortune [illegible]appy! [illegible]

[illegible]L. I.

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TRECOTHICK BOWER.

CHAP. I.

"Friendship, of itself a holy tie,
Is made more sacred by adversity."

MORCAR, earl of [illegible]gham, was brave, [illegible] him, [illegible] withal arrogant, irritable, and [illegible] inclined to virtue, when not [illegible] temptation, but easily induced [illegible]d prone, in conse[illegible] to [illegible]sions, which in [illegible]ons, have been checked, [illegible] monitions [illegible] wisdom, and rest[illegible] ation, were [illegible], by indulgence and [illegible], sprung to a height that overshadow[illegible] eclipsed his nobler qualities.

While tho[illegible]terested in his actions saw,

 from

from many of them, what might have been expected from his virtues, if properly cultivated, they also beheld a proof of the sad imbecility of human nature—an imbecility that cannot be acknowledged without the arrogance of pride being checked, and the beseeching eye uplifted to *Him* who can alone prevent the foot from stumbling.

To humble our pride, and restrain uncharitableness, nothing, indeed, will so effectually tend as the consciousness of our own weakn[illegible] perfect knowledge of ourselves; [illegible] that m[illegible] perceives his [illegible]ections will be the last to seek [illegible]vere in his condemnation of [illegible]hers, and from those who are [illegible] of mankind w[illegible] nute inspec[illegible] into themsel[illegible], by carefully viewing the mirror o[illegible] [illegible]nds, discover failings sufficient [illegible] abate their self-exaltation.

Yet none can desire t[illegible] [illegible]tirpation of the passions; they were i[illegible]nted in our nature

nature to conduce to our felicity, to vivify and enliven the moral atmosphere, to impel us to the attainment of greatness and glory; and he who should wish for more than their subjugation, would be an enemy to the happiness of his species.

Virtue and vice thus blended in the disposition of Morcar, esteem and censure were alike his portion; of the former he might, perhaps, have proved himself more deserving, but for the example of licentiousness set him [illegible] sovereign. Just as [illegible] emerged from [illegible]hood, Edward the Fourth became [illegible] in his long-contested claim. The [illegible]er of this prince is too well known to need expatiating [illegible]ed in almost continual excesses, [illegible] appeared [illegible] forgetful of the slaughter through which [illegible] had waded to the [illegible]ne. To be the scourge of iniquity, the encourager of virtue, the patron of literature and the fine and beneficial arts, seemed to have no charms for him. The fatal beauty that led him to provoke the

 fierce

fierce resentment of the haughty Warwick, failed of fixing his roving fancy. In his own person he set an example of the most daring profligacy, allowing no tie to restrain him from the pursuit of an object he admired. To his personal attractions, the seductive sweetness he could assume when he pleased, had he united the wish to do right, that heartfelt homage, which power alone can never exact, would have been his; but degraded by his vices, it was his title, not himself, that was respected. The youthful Sebergham was one of h[illegible] distinguished fav[illegible] the undeviating attachment of h[illegible] to that of York gave him, indeed, the strongest claims to his regard, but claims which might [illegible] disregarded by the di[illegible]ted Ed[illegible] for the pleasu[illegible] he derived from the versatility of his talents, and the attend[illegible] of a person, ever ready, without rebuke or animadversion, to assist him in [illegible] bold emprise or licentious frolic.

But the animadversions which he had the happiness

happiness of escaping from Morcar, through his thoughtlessness, Morcar himself was not without meeting on his conduct. In particular, did he hear himself censured for it, and reminded of the disgrace it was bringing on the memory of his noble sire, by a youth of the name of Edmund, and known only as his page.

To this youth a mystery appertained that none could fathom; he had been adopted and introduced into his family by the late earl, just after the final termination of the long-existing feuds between the rival houses of York and L[illegible]nd by him educated with a care and [illegible]rness that spoke no common interest in his fate, yet without [illegible]er this establishment being secured for him than [illegible] of [illegible]ge to his son; but as an excuse for this, it was a situation [illegible] undoubtedly afforded him a chance of advancing his fortune, by the opportunities it gave him of mixing with the great, and recommending himself to royal notice. For obtaining this, none

 were

were ever better calculated, possessing, as he did, in an eminent degree, those qualities that excite admiration. Nothing could exceed the gracefulness of his mien, or beauty of his countenance, neither any one excel him in martial exercises or polite accomplishments. A thousand times charmed with his spirit in one, his skill in the other, was Edward on the point of advancing him to some post of honour, but as often was withheld by the awakened suspicion excited by his features. He could not steadfastly contemplate him without being struck by the resemblance he traced in every look, in every gesture, between him and one of the deadliest of his house's foes, the deceased earl of [illegible]e tw[illegible] in the bloody and decisive battle of [illegible], in which England had to deplore the loss of her greatest and most distinguished warriors, fell—a resemblance adverse to every rising sentiment in his favour, from the suspicion it inspired; for Edward had not sufficient generosity to forgive, and the

idea

idea that the accomplished page of his favourite might be the son it was well known the ill-fated Lestwithiel had left, still operated to his prejudice. Often as he yielded to it, his brow lowered on him, and he felt ready, in a voice of thunder, to issue a hasty mandate for his destruction; for nothing short of the extirpation of the race, which, as far as he had the power, he had effected, could satisfy his savage thirst for vengeance.

That his resentments were so deadly, the deceased father of Morcar had no idea, else had he never thou[illegible] exposing his young favourite to his [illegible]on; for, as the wily king shrewdly [illegible]pected, Edmund [illegible]st lineal branch of the ancient [illegible] noble house of Lestwithiel. In early life, his unfortunate sire [illegible] his adopted father [illegible]ormed a friendship for each other, a friendship that, occasioned by particular circumstances, no after ones had power to impair, though the intercourse it prompted was suspended by the unhappy dif-

 ferences

ferences in which they were compelled to engage.

Dreadful times! in which friend was armed against friend, parent against child, child against father; in which victory was often purchased by the slaughter of those the heart most prized, and the laurel of the warrior steeped in kindred blood. Far, far be such a desolating scourge from ever again visiting these realms! Oh, never amongst kindred friends and brothers may the sacred olive branch again wither!

The countess of Lestwithiel no sooner heard the fatal issue of the bloody combat at Barnet, than sh[illegible] disguise, with her son, from the ravaged lands of her lord, to implore the protection of his no[illegible] the gallant Sebergham for his offspring.

The manner in which her supplications were received at once convinced [illegible] she had not overrated appearances, or judged too hastily from professions. She had no occasion to remind the sorrowing Sebergham of the days of other years, when giving

ing and receiving mutual tokens of regard, he and her unhappy lord had vowed perpetual friendship—no occasion to implore him not to let the consideration of their having been distinguished by different badges, having fought under different banners, have any weight with him. The heart of Sebergham eagerly acknowledged the claim which the offspring of his lamented friend had upon his kindness, a friend whom he probably would have less esteemed, had he been of his party, since he knew, by gratitude he was bound to the house of Lancaster. He took th[illegible]le boy to his arms, and solemnly vow[illegible] cherish him as his own, and educate him in a manner w[illegible] the noble race from which he drew his origin. This promise received, all worldly anxiety was terminated in the br[illegible] the widowed mother; bestowing on her boy all she had to give, a parent's benediction, and resigning him to the care of his selected father, with a prayer, that on the house of that father the deso-

lating

lating sword of war might never be allowed to inflict such calamities as it had done on hers, she immediately after retired to a monastery contiguous to the spot which had proved so fatal to her lord; and where, through the pious friendship of earl Sebergham, his remains had found a holy resting-place.

Here, in the course of a short time, her afflicted spirit was released from the troubles of this nether scene. Full of holy hope, she breathed her last sigh, requesting with it, that in the grave with him whose untimely fate had prematr[illegible] brought her to it, she might be lai[illegible]

To none but his son, some few years older than the young Lestwithi[illegible] he earl impart the secret of his real birth. [illegible] him he deemed it necessary to disclose it, in order to obtain an assurance [illegible] interest for him; and instruct him in the manner in which he conceived the retrieval of his fortunes might be best effected; for immediately after the overthrow of the

Lancastrian

Lancastrian faction, the estates of his family were confiscated, and its honours attainted: though, as previously observed, he did not imagine the nature of Edward as obdurate and implacable as it really was, he yet believed it sufficiently stern, to fear an abrupt application for the restoration of the title of Lestwithiel might be attended with injurious consequences; and accordingly deemed the safest course to be pursued would be, to give the youthful heir an opportunity of ingratiating himself into the royal favour, ere any exertion was made in his behalf. To afford him this, he appointed him page [illegible] son; but though he soon perceived the notice of the king a[illegible]y him, he perceived it without any indications of its being yet safe to prefer the supplication he intended. In time, however, he trusted what he so anxiously desired would be effected, namely, that the youthful spirit and graces of Edmund would beget such a prejudice in his favour, as would render it an easy matter to obtain the

the required boon for him. That this was a hope likely to be disappointed, he did not live to see: he died, just as his adopted son had completed his eighteenth year, and whom he left impressed with the sincerest sorrow for his death; but ungrateful would have been the heart of Edmund had not this been the case, experiencing, as he had done, from him all the care and tenderness of a parent. In his expiring moments, he again gave his interests in solemn charge to his son, commanding, if his exertions in his favour should ultimately prove unsuccessful, to put him in possession of a certain independence, which, in case of such a circumstance, he had provided for him. The solemn promise he received on this occasion was as solemnly intended to be kept; but notwithstanding this intention, time passed away without any effort being made by Morcar to fulfil it. The truth was, his love of pleasure was too great not to render him unwilling to enter upon any affair that might

might prove inimical to his pursuit of it. He knew not how his application in behalf of Edmund might be received, and accordingly felt averse to making it, with a determination, however, of yet doing so, though when, he could not prevail on himself to exactly decide.

Edmund deeply felt this delay, but felt too proud to express the resentment it inspired. To upbraid would be, he conceived, to indirectly solicit; and to solicit, in this instance, he disdained. The disappointment inflicted by the cruel procrastination was aggravated by its being unexpected; the restraint which, during the lifetime of his father, the dissipated Morcar [illegible] thought it expedient to impose upon himself, having prevented a thorough insight into his disposition. But for the virtues he in reality possessed, Edmund gave him ample credit; he saw him generous and feeling; and, in proportion as he believed him noble-minded, regretted the ascendancy of dissipation over him.

Yielding

Yielding to this regret, he often took upon himself the task of admonishing him of his conduct. Notwithstanding his youth, there was something in his manner too impressive to permit what he said to be disregarded by Morcar. Ashamed, however, of being rebuked by a mere stripling, as he conceived, in comparison with himself—a stripling bequeathed, in a manner, to his tutelary care, he affected to turn his remonstrances into ridicule, declaring, with his waving curls and downy cheek, he was much fitter for the part of Ganymede than Mentor.

Of a sufficient [illegible] at the time his house became involved in the general ruin that overtook the partisans of that of Lancaster, to be fully sensible of the value of what was lost, Edmund became every day still more impatient for the retrieval of his lineal honours. Proud and aspiring, inflamed with all the hereditary ambition of his haughty race, he longed to throw off the shackles of dependence—a dependence light

light and easy, it was true, but still, from the name it bore, galling to his soul. He could not forget the adulation of other days; the homage that, as the heir of the noble Lestwithiel, he had been in the habit of receiving; could not forget sufficiently what he had been, to be able to endure with calmness what he now was.

Like flowers that alternately expand and decline beneath the influence of the rising and the setting sun, his hopes alternately, each day, revived and fell. Still the flush of expectation gave warmth to his cheek, as he saw the earl preparing for court; and still, from his silence on his return, he felt the chill of disappointment stealing away its lively tint.

Yielding to the impetuous feelings of his soul, he was often on the point of making that application himself which he found so cruelly delayed by another—often on the point of throwing himself at the feet of the king, and in person pleading his own cause; but was still deterred, by the recollected

recollected counsel of his deceased benefactor, to avoid precipitation on the subject.

Long, however, to endure a life of lingering suspense, of apparent dependence, of inglorious indolence, he felt to be impossible. Should the promised intercession of the earl be much longer deferred, he resolved on a bold effort for himself, and, if unsuccessful in it, on immediately after bidding a final adieu to a country in which his birthright was lost.

This was a resolve, however, he could not form without the most acute regret; passionately attached to the land of his forefathers, by a thousand endearing recollections, he could not think on the possibility of yet becoming an exile from it without the most agonizing sensations.

On the home he had so early lost, his imagination incessantly dwelt. In his waking visions, as well as nightly dreams, his troubled fancy was continually transporting him to his natal towers. Again, in reality,

reality, to behold them, he often essayed, urged by that ardent attachment which the heart of strong sensibility almost invariably contracts for the place of its nativity; but was still prevented by the fearful solicitude of his departed friend, lest something should occur, in such a visit, to betray him.

To this solicitude his successor was a stranger. Accordingly, soon after his decease, Edmund, at full liberty to obey the impulse of inclination, proceeded on a pilgrimage to his hereditary home, on the banks of the Tamar, in Cornwall—a pilgrimage from which he returned still more anxious, more decided, and more impatient, than ever; impelled by new motives, new hopes, new wishes, on determining speedily to ascertain what he had to expect. But from carrying this determination into effect as soon as he intended, he was prevented by a request of the earl's.

His maternal uncle, the old lord Bolton, during

during the absence of Edmund in Cornwall, had proposed an alliance between him and the young heiress of the illustrious house of De Bohun, in Northumberland, trusting a connexion of the kind would operate as some kind of check upon his dissipated propensities.

These allowed him but little to relish the proposal. Aware, however, that it might be prejudicial to his interest to disoblige the baron, and that besides, at some period or other, he would be absolutely expected to form an alliance of the kind, he did not allow himself to express any positive repugnance to it; but nothing could induce him to do more till he exactly knew what the lady was.

On his uncle's information he would not entirely depend, aware of their tastes not being exactly similar, and that qualities, high in the estimation of one, were but slightly regarded by the other. But how to obtain the knowledge he required was a matter of perplexity, objecting in per-

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son to make an effort for the purpose, lest declining her hand, after an introduction to her, as might be the case, should be construed into an affront.

At length it occurred to him to employ Edmund in the affair, convinced that on his discretion and discernment he might safely rely. What he requested was readily granted; there was nothing, indeed, compatible with honour, he could desire of the noble youth there was any chance of his being refused; so fervent was the gratitude he felt for the obligations conferred upon him by his house, so ardent his zeal for his happiness.

Having received the necessary instructions, he accordingly set out for the north, for hastening his departure to which, the earl had yet another motive than the one he avowed—a motive that rendered him restless, agitated, and impatient in the extreme.

Chancing one morning to roam near a sequestered bower in the garden, while yet

yet deliberating how to act, whether or not to make him his confidant in the affair, he espied him sitting there, through the foliage, with a locket in his hand, which he alternately kissed and gazed on, with every mark of rapture and devotion.

Rendered curious by what he saw, the earl, almost involuntarily, stopped to observe him. He had not long done so, when, in addition to it, he heard him sigh forth the name of Emmeline, in tones the most impassioned.

In the suspicion, previously excited, by what he had just seen, of his having formed a secret attachment, he was now confirmed, but who the object of it was he could not possibly divine, unable as he was to recollect knowing any one who bore the name he had heard.

While vainly striving to do so, Edmund rose, and unwilling to be detected watching him in this manner, lord Seberghham directly drew back; but after a short turn presently joined him in the bower, which, extending

to

to the very edge of the Thames, commanded a delightful view of that beautiful river, cutting its winding course through fields green as the opening Spring, and smooth as the new-mowed mead—rows of stately trees here spreading their intermingled branches over the murmuring water; there, luxuriant woods, shade sweetly melting into shade, and admitting, through various openings, partial views of scattered villages and noble mansions, with bleating flocks, feeding on the swelling lawns, and kine, ruminating on the broken and shrubby banks.

For a moment he meditated rallying him on what he had seen, and accusing him of dissimulation; but an instant's reflection checked this intention, by tending to convince him that it was not probable Edmund would voluntarily acknowledge what he had so carefully tried to keep secret, and that, consequently, the likeliest method of obtaining the knowledge he required was by still appearing ignorant on the

the subject, lest Edmund might otherwise continue on his guard.

Yet why he should be so anxious to discover who the object of his secret attachment was, he could not possibly tell, except it was from some jealous apprehension of her being some one whom he himself admired.

In the ignorance that disquieted him he was not long kept. As they were perambulating the garden, they were suddenly joined by a young courtier named sir Bevis, who, after a little conversation, abruptly addressing Edmund, of whose journey to Cornwall his intimacy in the family of the earl made him acquainted, inquired whether, during his sojourn there, he had seen, or heard, by any chance, of the celebrated beauty of that part of the country, the lady Emmeline, the daughter and heiress of the baron Trecothick.

With a countenance suffused with crimson, eyes half averted, and lips evidently quivering through emotion, Edmund falteringly

teringly replied he had. The deep crimson of his cheek, his embarrassment and hesitation, all betrayed, to the keenly observant eye of Sebergham, the secret of his heart, that she was the object of the love it cherished, she the Emmeline whom so tenderly, so passionately, he had apostrophized.

A kind of rankling sensation pervaded his bosom at the conviction. Yet it was possible, he suddenly reflected, for Edmund to love without being beloved; but how ungenerous to wish this might be the case! Yes, he felt it to be so. Still, however, he could not bring himself to think with complacency of his having made a conquest the most illustrious might be vain of.

Anxious to learn more of the fair heiress, he was not sorry at Edmund's speedily retiring, evidently owing to the confusion he was in; but he succeeded in hearing little more than that she was beautiful beyond

yond description, and as yet, sir Bevis believed, unengaged.

Would that he could ascertain whether this were really the case, lord Sebergham involuntarily wished; a secret journey to the place of her residence might enable him to do so, he reflected; and no sooner had the idea occurred, than he decided on availing himself of the pretext he had for sending Edmund to Northumberland.

Scarcely was he gone, however, ere better thoughts than those that had chiefly instigated him to urge his departure began to prevail. Would it be fair, would it be honourable, he demanded of himself, after what he had discovered, to attempt making an interest for himself in the bosom of the lovely Emmeline? Would the silence of Edmund on the subject be able to make him stand acquitted of baseness in his own eyes, should he do so? No. Yet to lose the chance of securing an alliance so desirable, from a too scrupulous delicacy, how agitating the idea!

How

How his uncle came to omit suggesting this to him, he could not well imagine, or rather felt irritated and indignant at his having done so.

Now he almost decided on a journey to Cornwall, and availing himself of the intimacy that had subsisted between the deceased earl, his father, and hers, to obtain an introduction to her—now shrunk from the thought as one of meditated baseness.

In this fluctuating state he retired to rest the night after Edmund's departure; but from the slumbers which it rendered restless, he was suddenly startled by a noise in the adjacent gallery. Instantly rising, he snatched up his sword, and with the lamp that burned constantly in his chamber at night, issued from it; at a little distance he caught a glimpse of some one retreating within the apartment that was Edmund's; he directly rushed forward, and ere the door could be fastened, setting his foot against it, burst it open.

To his utter amazement, on doing so,

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the features of Hugh Seagrove, the immediate attendant of Edmund, and who, that morning, at sunrise, had quitted the residence of the earl, for the purpose of accompanying him into Northumberland, met his view.

"Why, in the name of all the saints in the calendar, is it you I really behold, Hugh?" said the earl, after surveying him for a moment with a look of wild surprise, "or only your fetch come to give ghostly notice of your approaching dissolution?"

"Oh no, an please you, my lord, 'tis I myself, body and bones, Hugh Seagrove, that your lordship sees," replied the evidently trembling varlet.

"And prythee what has brought thee back in this sudden and clandestine manner? dost know that fool's head of thine was within an inch of being sliced off, as clean as ever that of pumpkin's was."

"Oh, the saints! Well, if I had lost my head on such a foolish errand, I never should have forgiven master Edmund."

"What,

"What, is it an errand from him that brought thee back?"

"Yes, merely to seek for this silly trifle," holding up, as he spoke, the identical locket which the earl had seen in the hand of Edmund in the bower; "he's as full of vagaries as his betters; no offence, I hope, my lord; and missing it just as we got to Hatfield, right or wrong would force me back to seek for it, but with a strict charge not to let any one know he had done so; for the enabling me to observe which, he gave me the key, which, as your lordship knows, he has of one of the private gates."

"Is it an amulet?" said the earl, taking it with apparent carelessness from him, affected for the purpose of concealing the real anxiety he felt, to be better informed on the subject, and which he conceived it probable he might now be, owing to the simplicity of Hugh, and his having attended Edmund on his recent journey to Cornwall.

Hugh laughed—" To see how wide some folks are of the mark !" said he.

" Well, I shan't be very wide of it, I suppose, if I guess it to be the present of some fair lady. Come, confess, for I see you know something ; and I should like to detect the young varlet, he pretends to so much sanctity—is not your master a great rogue ?"

Hugh grinned—" By'r lady, that were a good joke indeed, to blab, and so run the risque of a good trouncing, for again, no offence, I hope, my lord, master Edmund is quite as fiery as his betters."

" A fine fellow truly, to be afraid of having your doublet dusted ! But come, I promise not to betray what you tell, so let me have no more hesitation on the subject."

" Well, if I must, I must," said Hugh; " and, to be sure, without any sin I may oblige your lordship, seeing as how I never was bound to secresy, master Edmund knowing

knowing nothing of my being acquainted with what I am about telling. You know I went with him into Cornwall, whither he journied, he said, merely for the sake of viewing that part of the kingdom; and such I suppose was the case, seeing that from the moment of our reaching Launceston till we left it, he never ceased rambling about; I wanted much to attend him, but he sternly commanded me never to attempt following, and so I was fain to rove about by myself. Well, one day, as I went whistling along, sniffing up the fresh air of the fields, and thinking of nothing at all, as one may say, there came on a pelting thunder-storm, that made me run for it; near the place where it surprised me was an old deserted castle, and there I took shelter. Scarcely had I done so, when methought I heard the voice of master Edmund, in deep and sorrowful conversation with some one. Somewhat surprised, as well as curious, I stole on tiptoe

to the spot from whence I fancied it came; and through a loophole in the wall that divided the chamber he was in from the passage I came through, beheld him talking with a young and beautiful lady. So much were they engrossed by each other, that had I been even less cautious than I was in approaching, still I believe I should not have been heard. He was telling her he was not born in the obscure station he had reason to suppose she imagined, and conjuring her to give him hopes of becoming his, should he succeed in obtaining his birthright."

"And this," said the earl, still fixedly eyeing the locket, "is a token that he did not beseech in vain?"

Hugh nodded assentingly—"True, my lord; but certainly he is so handsome a youth, and then his manners are so courteous, that one cannot wonder he should be a successful suitor."

"Well,

"Well, and is this all you know?" impatiently demanded the earl. "Did you not learn who she was?"

Again Hugh nodded—"That I did," he replied; "but how, I shall not tire your lordship by detailing; I shall only say, that I rested not till, by dint of watching, and describing, and inquiring, I learnt she was the beautiful daughter of the baron Trecothick."

"And of her hand, the hand of one of the richest heiresses in these realms, has Edmund been indeed so fortunate as to obtain a promise!" in a tone of irrepressible and almost indignant vexation exclaimed the earl.

"Yes, that he has indeed; but then 'tis only conditional—not to be fulfilled, except he recovers his own, whatever that may be, for with all my efforts I could not discover."

Without appearing to notice this evident hint of Hugh's expectation of having his curiosity, in turn, gratified, the earl continued

tinued to muse, with something like a sensation of envy, on the good fortune of Edmund, his present situation taken into consideration, without any of the advantages of acknowledged rank to obtain the prospect of such an alliance—"And shall a mere stripling, a dependant," he demanded of himself, "be allowed to bear away such a prize—to raise himself to sudden pre-eminence, without competition? Why," he mentally continued, "why was not this alliance suggested to me, seeing it is one I never could have declined, from its numerous advantages? And is she so handsome, so very handsome?" he almost sighingly inquired.

"Is she!" repeated Hugh; "you know our queen is reckoned handsome; and so she is, Heaven bless her highness! and so is the lady Anne—and so is merry Mrs. Shore; but these are all no more to be compared to her than I am to your lordship; so you may judge, my lord, whether she deserves to be called handsome or no."

Again,

Again, almost sighing, the earl returned the locket; and repeating his promise of keeping secret what he had heard, retired to his chamber, but not again to rest; all disposition to it was destroyed by what he had been listening to. He could not forbear envying Edmund—could not forbear thinking, that in obtaining the regard of the fair Emmeline, he had obtained what he himself was better entitled to—could not avoid imagining, that from his silence on the subject, it was his wish to burst from obscurity without owning further obligations to him, an idea that made him accuse him of unparalleled haughtiness and ingratitude. In short, he felt as if Edmund had done him an injury, and gave way, therefore, without hesitation, to a feeling of resentment against him.

His imagination inflamed by the description he had received of the beauteous daughter of Trecothick, he longed to behold her—"But wherefore," he demanded, "engaged as she is—engaged, but how? Conditionally,

Conditionally, clandestinely, without the sanction of her father." Why then deny himself the pleasure of seeing her? Why a possibility of being allowed to enter the fair field of open competition for her.

But would it be consistent with real honour for him to do so? Knowing what he did, again he demanded, would it not be a mean subterfuge to plead ignorance of the affair, because supposed ignorant of it? Oh yes, he felt it would; and with a feeling of self-degradation, for ever having formed such a thought, shrank from it. But to permit ourselves to deliberate between right and wrong, is to weaken our power of resisting temptation. The arguments he had had recourse to, for the purpose of excusing his suddenly-conceived idea of perfidy to Edmund, were of too plausible a nature not to have made some impression on him; and accordingly, without further delay, he finally resolved on proceeding to the castle of Trecothick.

But so truly hateful to him was any thing

thing like an absolute apostacy from honour, that the resolution was no sooner taken, than he tried to persuade himself it was formed with no other view than that of merely gratifying his curiosity, or rather that nothing should induce him to swerve from integrity.

CHAP. II.

"In such a place as this, at such an hour,
If ancestry can be in aught believ'd,
Descending spirits have convers'd with men,
And told the secrets of the world unknown."

ALIKE prompt and impatient, the rising sun beheld him on his way to Cornwall, attended by a few chosen domestics, but to whom he imparted not whither they were going, till they were some miles from town.

It was settled that Edmund should remain for some days at the castle of De Bohun; he therefore did not conceive it improbable that before his return he should be back from Cornwall; but if not, had no doubt of being able to impose on him, with

with regard to the place he had really been at.

He commenced his journey in the delicious month of June, when all is fragrance and harmony, all calculated to inspire vernal delight and joy.

His taste was not so vitiated by the excesses of a court, as to render him incapable of relishing the beauties of nature; on the contrary, he experienced the most delightful sensations, as he surveyed the smiling scenery he past through, inhaled the sweetness of the meadows, and hearkened to the thrilling songsters of the groves. These sensations, united at times to a kind of wavering in his intention of proceeding, and the recollections of former times, that were revived as he advanced, often induced him to linger on his way; for along the road he travelled were alternately to be traced vestiges of the Romans and their immediate successors in the island, the Saxons, in the mouldering strong holds and curious entrenchments of one,

one, the ancient cairns and rude monuments of partial victories of the other.

Passing through a succession of smiling villages, watered by pleasant streams, and embellished with rural shades, he reached Reading, where, alighting at the magnificent Abbey, he stopt for the night. The quietude that prevailed within its consecrated walls—the mild, yet awe-inspiring gloom of its lengthening aisles—the calm and abstracted air of its holy inmates, all tended to excite feelings that rendered him almost reluctant to quit it; nor did he, till he had first seen every thing worthy of observation here, and in particular the tombs of its noble founder, Henry the First, and his queen.

On the succeeding day there was much less to engage his attention than on the preceding. The farther he advanced, the more thinly he found the villages scattered. Sometimes he proceeded miles without discerning any trace of inhabitation. There was something in these open and silent tracts

tracts of country, a contrast too great to the busy scenes he had lately been engaged in, not to impress him with a feeling of melancholy, so much is man the creature of circumstances, alive to feeling, prone to integrity, till some powerful motive of self-interest blunts the one, or holds out a lure to draw him from the other.

The gradual, and almost imperceptible, effect produced upon him by the scenes through which he passed, occasioned him to reflect, with still deeper remorse, on the wrong he had momentarily meditated against Edmund, and determine, more firmly than ever, to let nothing tempt him to commit one in reality.

The sun was setting over the hills, imparting a kind of softened glory to the distant prospect, inexpressibly beautiful, as Morcar entered the dusky forest of Savernake. He had not advanced far, amidst its wild thorns, ere the scanty portion of daylight that remained was completely obscured by the overhanging boughs of the

clustering

clustering trees, darkened with the dismal shades of coming night, and overrun with fern and brushwood, wearing, at this hour, a funereal hue; nothing could be more gloomily savage than the scene; far as the eye could penetrate, nothing met it but obstructing shades, receding into each other, amidst which, where here and there a grey gleam of twilight found admittance, a thousand dismal shadows seemed to stalk. Fear, however, was a stranger to the heart of Morcar; yet to linger in the way of uncertain dangers, he deemed no proof of courage; he would accordingly have quickened his speed, but for the caution requisite, from the ruggedness of the straggling paths, and the naked roots of the old trees. Compelled to slacken it, he gradually fell into a train of thought, that quickly abstracted him from the scene, but to a perception of which he was soon recalled by a retrograde movement of his steed.

Surprised, he uplifted his head from his bosom, on which it had sunk, and beheld

a tall

a tall and dusky figure seizing the reins. It instantly struck him he was way-laid; and accordingly drawing his shining glaive, he smote the figure; but the blow produced no effect; it seemed to fall on air.

"Who art thou?" demanded Morcar, for the first time panic-struck, as he gazed on the motionless form before him, and felt his steed shivering under him.

"Thy warning friend," replied a deep sepulchral voice. "Speed back, speed back: for ruin awaits thee in the onward path."

"What!" exclaimed Morcar, endeavouring to speak collectedly, though he trembled with emotion, "am I so favoured, then, as to have a friend who watches in secret over my safety? But reveal thyself, for prudence forbids attention to an unknown, lest there should be another motive for his advice than the one avowed."

"Behold then!" was the reply; and dropping the rein, the figure pressed nearer to him; and shaking back a cowl that had hitherto

hitherto enveloped its features, discovered the ghastly visage of his lamented sire! terrible was his aspect; his eyes, like two decaying fires, shed a pale flame over his countenance, that rendered more ghastly the features of death. An icy horror crept through the veins of Morcar; his flesh quivered, and involuntarily he called aloud to his attendants; but it was some minutes ere they heard him, owing to their having unwittingly loitered behind him, in chatting of the occurrences of the road.

At length he heard them quickly advancing, and at the instant the appalling phantom vanished into air. He was falling from his horse as they came up with him; they lifted him from it, and uncovering his head, he presently revived.

As soon as they saw him sufficiently recovered to speak, they were eager in their inquiries as to the cause of the terror he had displayed; but this the earl declined explaining; he knew not what to think, and therefore determined on concealing the

the recent occurrence, lest its disclosure should occasion unpleasant conjectures, or be a source of ridicule.

Desiring his steed to be led forward, he slowly followed, deeply pondering on the recent incident; though not untinctured with the superstition of the times, yet so little cause did he imagine for a visitation of the kind, that he could scarcely avoid thinking what he had recently seen an illusion of his senses—"Yes, yes, it must be so!" he inwardly exclaimed, and his heart suddenly lightened of an oppressive load by the persuasion, he hurried forward, and again mounted. For a minute he had wavered about proceeding; but in consequence of the opinion he had now adopted, no longer hesitated on the subject.

Just as he remounted, a passing bell struck out; he almost started, and in an agitated accent—"What bell is that," he demanded, "that flings its sullen sound upon the evening air?"

"Bell.

"Bell, my lord!" his attendants, almost with one voice, repeated, "we hear no bell."

"Strange!" he cried. "Still it swings its hollow sound around, and seems to me a knell."

"Oh dear, my lord, how you scare me," exclaimed Corbeau, one of his suite, "by what you say! I know there is no church or convent sufficiently near, for I know these parts well, to let us hear a real bell here; and to hear an imaginary one, is a sure sign of evil. There was my lord Gundulph, and his beautiful dame, the lady Mercia, whom I had the honour of serving before I became your lordship's vassal, in travelling over one of the moors in Cumberland, they heard just such a sound; and though they arrived at their castle in good health, it is well known they were both dead in less than a week after. Ah, its not for nothing, I fear, I saw a winding sheet in one of the tapers in your lordship's chamber last night, nor spilt the salt, as

I was

I was putting it into my pottage this morning."

"True, so you did," said one of his fellows; "but by our lady, you didn't spill the cup of good Rhenish you had after."

"Why no, truly," cried Corbeau, with a grin, "that were a pity; when one has any thing precious in hand, 'tis natural they should be careful of it. But what I have told you is not all. The ravens and owls never left screaming and hooting last night at the Abbey, and we all know what their cries portend. Bless his reverence! but when I heard the hooting of the latter, I thought it was the fat abbot himself I heard snoring, till flap flap came a pair of great wings against the casement."

"Peace, peace, thou croaker," impatiently commanded the earl, "and keep thy omens and thy auguries to thyself."

Again he pressed forward—again he felt his spirits oppressed; but chiding himself for weakness, in suffering the suggestions of vulgar superstition to effect him, he presently

sently succeeded in arguing himself out of his dejection.

His efforts for the purpose were seconded by the partial dispersion of the gloom in which he had been involved. The moon, in silent glory, rising, silvered the broad expanse, and shed a tremulous lustre over the solemn scene. Its effect upon him was of the most impressive nature, such as elevated his thoughts, and gradually led to the most sublime contemplations. The wonders of creation—the goodness of the Deity—the noble purposes for which man was created, evinced in his majestic form and immortal spirit—" And shall," said the now moralizing Morcar, " shall he whose soul is imprest with reason's signet, that his heart might know, and, knowing him, adore the gracious Creator, behold his wondrous works, partake of his bounties, the blessings he has so profusely scattered in the path of man, and yet feel no sentiment of adoration or gratitude for him. Oh, what monstrous impiety! what base ingratitude!

ingratitude! and yet is he not daily guilty of it, who has given himself up to revels and to riot?

"How does the heart swell and dilate with pride at the slightest notice of an earthly sovereign, and yet with cold indifference, too often, thinks of enjoying the protection of him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain! Oh, strange inconsistency! to be proud, to be vain, of the favour of a being, weak, frail, fallible, as ourselves, and yet not to exult in that of him who rideth on the wings of the wind, whom cherubim and seraphim obey —who, through the gloom of chaos, flashed intolerable day—who bade the warring elements to cease—outspread heaven's azure canopy, decked it with the radiant sun, the silver moon, and all the glittering host of countless constellations—at whose voice the everlasting hills arose, the earth threw out flowers, and tall forests started on the mountain's brow! Oh, terrible insensibility! to bend, with trembling deference,

rence, before an earthly throne, and not fall prostrate before him to whom so much more is due than can ever be owing to mortal man! who from nothing called us into life, endued us with faculties almost divine, with senses to luxuriate in the beauties of creation, to enjoy the grateful vicissitude of day and night, the splendor of the heavens, the sweetness of the aromatic herbs and flowers, the rich flavour of the ripened fruits, above all, the delights of mutual tenderness, of commingling souls.

"But such is the effect of wild revelry; it steeps the soul in a kind of Lethean forgetfulness of what it owes to Heaven. Henceforth, from time to time, will I still steal from the degenerate crowd, in order to recollect myself, and woo fair Wisdom in her lonely haunts, those tranquil shades and solitary bowers in which she loves to dwell."

Such was the resolve of the lately dissipated Morcar, affected by local circumstances, and the recent incident, and a sweet

sweet and placid sensation was the result of it, for the heart is not slow in its approval of a virtuous determination.

This night, as on the preceding, he partook of the hospitality of a religious house. The next morning, after travelling a few miles, he reached Marlborough, where he paused for some time, partly for the purpose of refreshment, partly to gratify his curiosity by a view of the famous Roman entrenchment there. As he rode over the adjoining downs, he could not avoid being amused by the remarks of his attendants on the stones, denominated Grey Wethers by the country people, that, in infinite numbers, and of all dimensions, lie scattered over them, strongly resembling, it is confessed by travellers, on a transient view, straggling sheep, and which are rendered a subject of still greater curiosity by being detached from any rock.

The next stage was the little town of Calne, situated on a stony hill, and famous for having been one of the Roman stations,

and seats of the West Saxon kings. These were circumstances that did not render his being compelled to make another stop there unpleasing to Sebergham.

The remainder of the journey passed without any thing else occurring worthy of note; and towards the decline of the third day, the awful shades of Trecothick appeared in view, with its noble battlements and ivied turrets, backed by a rich amphitheatre of woods, stretching to an immeasurable extent.

The impressive grandeur of former ages was here conspicuous; nothing could be more magnificent or striking; the grandeur of the towering woods heightened the effect the building was calculated to produce, forming, as they appeared to do, a boundless contiguity of shade. Their deep gloom was finely contrasted by the bright verdure of the intervening lawns, falling in soft undulations from copse to copse; a thousand silvery streams meandered through these shades, some with labyrinthian intricacy through

through the intertwisted roots of the old oaks, others over pebbly beds to the Tamar, which divided the lands from Devonshire.

Morcar, retaining but one attendant, directed the rest of his retinue to Launceston, and without pausing proceeded to Trecothick.

The sky was now shaded by the clouds of night—the birds were warbling their closing lays—the peasant whistled over the glebe to his peaceful cottage—the flocks faintly lowed as folded for the night—the trees rustled in the breeze—the air, cooled by the falling dews, gave to the senses delight and energy—the glow-worm lit its little lamp, as if vainly wishing to emulate the stars that glittered in the firmament. Through innumerable brakes was seen the faint taper of the peasant, while eminently conspicuous from the storied windows of the Gastle a blaze of light was diffused around.

But the mingled sounds that fluctuated

on the air soon died away; and Morcar presently after entering a shelving lane, sunk between steep banks, overrun with thorns and thickets, found the Castle and the cots alike hid from his view. The scene was in unison with h's present feelings, or rather excited reflections that imparted something of pensive solemnity to them. Involuntarily he checked his steed, and raising his eyes to the starry cope of heaven, contemplated it with mingled wonder and delight.

"Oh thou," he cried, as he gazed upon these, the most glorious of the works of the divinity, "who sittest enthroned above this sphere, how illustrative is all of thy goodness, the mild splendours of even, the blazing refulgence of noon!

"Oh, how can the wayward heart of man repine for the luxuries of art, when Nature, like a kind parent, has provided so much for his entertainment and pleasure—gratifications that cannot pall by repetition, or vitiate by enjoyment!

"But

"But on him who suffers himself to be engaged in vicious pursuits, her gifts are thrown away.

"And shall I," demanded Morcar, blushing as he asked his heart the question, "shall I, aware of this, suffer myself to be drawn into such pursuits again? Shall I ——" His steed climbed a gentle ascent at the instant, and the next he found himself before the gates of the Castle.

He instantly sounded the suspended horn: the shrill blast echoing through all the lofty towers and portals, quickly brought the porter to the gate. To his interrogatory the earl replied by announcing his name; his late father and the baron had been well acquainted, and he meant to assign the esteem which, as a friend of his deceased sire's, he experienced for the latter, as the motive of his visit.

CHAP. III.

"Oh, knew he but his happiness! of men
The happiest he, who, far from public rage,
———— with a choice few retir'd,
Drinks the pure pleasures of the rural life."

The announcement of his name procured him immediate admission; and passing through a magnificent hall, he was conducted to an inner apartment, from whence the female part of the family had just retired for the night, but where the baron still remained.

His reception was of the most cordial nature—his welcome a twofold one, on his father's account and his own; the baron having highly esteemed the deceased earl, and being too remote from the court to hear

hear any thing of his successor that could injure him in his estimation.

The baron was now declining into the vale of years; but his was that green old age which nature allows the children of temperance to enjoy; like the hardy evergreen, he bloomed and flourished in the winter of his days; health flushed his cheeks, and his eyes were replete with animation.

The table was quickly respread. On its being again uncovered, and the domestics withdrawn, an unrestrained conversation took place, which, over the sparkling bowl, was prolonged to a late hour.

Those who have once mixed in busy life can seldom so entirely detach their thoughts from it, as not to feel interested in the passing occurrences of the day. This was the case with the baron; he could not help being pleased whenever he had an opportunity of gratifying the anxiety he felt on the subject. Coming immediately from court, Morcar was perfectly qualified to

answer his minute inquiries. The result was, an apprehension on the part of the baron that civil discord was not yet at an end in England—"Much I fear the wily Richard," he said; "much I fear the innocent blood that has been shed must have atonement. Intricate and perplexed as appear human events, yet carefully to investigate their causes, and we shall find them the regular result of each other—the miseries of dire ambition but a just retribution for previous guilt. In no instance I think is this more strikingly exemplified than in the history of the rival houses of these realms. To begin with the unhappy Richard, the assassination of his uncle of Gloucester was followed by his own; for notwithstanding all that has been said to induce a contrary belief, he too surely fell by the ruthless hand of violence. The bloody fate of the blooming Rutland was followed by the equally cruel murder of the youthful Edward; and though that of his saint-like father, the next hapless victim,

victim to ferocious revenge, has not yet been avenged, let us not delude ourselves with a hope that it will not, for blood will have blood; over the unjust shedders of it the sword of terrible retribution hangs suspended but by a single hair."

"Alas, unhappy land!" exclaimed the earl; "what dire calamities hast thou not already sustained through the wildness of ambition!"

"What, indeed!" rejoined the baron. "Sobered as my feelings now are, by time and reflection, I cannot avoid viewing with something of astonishment the wild eagerness of mankind after what they are destined for so short a space to enjoy. Scarce has the haughty hero, who carried war and desolation into almost unknown regions, time to recount his conquests, ere a mightier than he sweeps him off from the face of the earth."

"But might not the reflection be too far pursued?" said Morcar. "Creatures as we are of noble intellect, should we not,

 in

in our pursuits, be detached from selfish considerations? And would this be the case if we paused in the midst of them, because there was a possibility of our not reaping the fruit of our labours?"

"It might be so," returned the baron; "but you mistake me if you imagine I deem the consideration of the brevity of human life should do more than check the inordinance of ambition, and prevent a too eager thirst after riches; what may be of benefit to our country, or posterity, nothing should deter us from."

The midnight hour sounded ere they separated for the night; but not immediately after retiring to repose did Morcar enjoy it, so agitated were his spirits, so tumultuous his feelings, from the different reflections that pervaded his mind.

Inimical to repose, the first twitter of the birds roused him from his couch. At an open window he observed the progress of the rising sun. As the horizon kindled, and the mists of early day dispersed before

its influence, what a prospect of magnificence and beauty met his view! The dusky veil of twilight withdrawn, it seemed as if a new creation had burst upon his sight.

The chequered light produced by the partial admission of the sunbeams through the woods had the most beautiful effect. Here all was solemn gloom, there bright verdure. The streamlets, glittering and sparkling in the dancing beams, seemed like rills of silver as they pursued their devious course to the Tamar, now seen, now disappearing amidst the luxuriant shades. The fragrant shrubs and flowers that decked the bowers and enamelled the sod, freshened by the dews of night, exhaled the choicest sweets. Herds of deer browsed beneath the ample foliage, now playfully bounding after one another, now suddenly stopping, as if to gaze at "early passenger." Through various openings in the woods a distant view of meads and sunburnt fields was caught, scattered over with flocks and herds, and from which, at inter-

vals, blended with the tuneful melody of the shady groves, was heard the cheering voice of "social labour, love, and happy glee." Morcar was enchanted—"Oh Heavens!" he exclaimed, "to what real enjoyments have I hitherto been a stranger! How faint, how cold, the feelings inspired by the pomp and unvarying magnificence of a court, compared to those awakened by these scenes, where nature is every where recognised! Here all is pure, simple, and lovely. Nothing is to be dreaded from the rich banquet prepared for the senses, but all is calculated at once to give delight and energy to the soul. How healthful is this balmy air, that, as it breathes over the flowers, seems to steal their sweetness, for the purpose of wafting it to the delighted sense!—how enlivening the gay notes of these feathered choristers!—how pleasing the solemn feeling, inspired by the vernal gloom of these deep woods!"

To enjoy at large the beauties he so much admired, he unclosed a door opening

to

to a private staircase, that gave him immediate egress from the Castle.

Descending a steep slope, covered with the finest verdure, he found himself in a deep glen, encompassed with woods of an awful and majestic appearance. This he immediately concluded to be a favourite spot, pavillions and arbours being scattered around, composed of luxuriant and sweet-scented shrubs. A clear stream wound through it, with that murmuring sound so pleasing to the romantic and pensive. But the attention of Morcar was soon engrossed by one object. He had not proceeded far, when passing an obtruding hillock, overrun with wild thickets, he beheld a young female playfully decorating a fawn with flowers. He started, for instantly it struck him it was Emmeline he saw; nor was he mistaken; it was she indeed, the admired daughter of the noble Trecothick, and one of the fairest of her sex.

Tall, slight, elegantly formed, it was impossible

impossible to say whether the eye took most pleasure in resting on the gracefulness of her light form, or the varying expression of her animated countenance. Large, and of a heavenly blue, her eyes were full of a softness the most dangerous, a sensibility the most bewitching, and of which the fugitive blushes of her beautiful cheek were alike indicative; locks of glossy brown, as they played over her open brow, and round her polished neck, gave luxuriance to her beauty, and an air of inexpressible innocence to her countenance, such as was calculated to immediately interest the heart and fascinate the eye.

Morcar continued to gaze some minutes without being observed; at length the sudden bounding away of her little favourite causing her to turn, she beheld him.—"Oh, truant," cried the enraptured earl, glancing after the flying fawn, "to break those chains which monarchs might be proud to wear."

"Lord Sebergham, I presume?" said the

the fair heiress, with a graceful inclination of her head.

Morcar lowly bowed—"Honoured in being known to you," he replied.

She smiled, and glancing from him with a look of meaning, his eyes involuntarily followed the direction of hers, and he beheld the baron with his lady, with several guests, and a train of attendants, approaching.

His noble host greeted him with cordiality—"I was just on the point of sending a page to your chamber," he said, "not imagining you so early a riser, from being accustomed to scenes that are but too apt to give us a habit of encroaching on the morning; but let me introduce you to my family." He then presented him to the baroness and the lady Emmeline; after which he desired the former to lead on with the earl.

With a gracious smile the noble dame immediately obeyed, by giving her hand to her youthful guest, and leading the way to

to one of those pavillions already mentioned, where the morning repast was now prepared.

"During this delightful season," said the baron, addressing lord Sebergham, as they seated themselves at the table, "we seldom sequester ourselves much within doors, particularly at this delightful hour, when all is fragrance and beauty, cheering and invigorating to the soul. When nature, I may say, seems to have experienced a renovation, how luxurious are the sensations the enjoyment of its sweets occasion!—to what harmony does it attune the feelings!—with what benevolence expand the heart! for how impossible to be happy one's self, without wishing to contribute to the happiness of others! I cannot view yon bright refulgent orb, and bask in its beams, without feeling a gladness of heart that impels me to greater kindness and sociability. But dull indeed must he be on whom the seasons have no influence; or rather unworthy of the goodness of Heaven who

who can partake of its bounties without thinking what others may require."

"They must indeed," assented the earl; "and yet how many enjoy its gifts, without once thinking of the divine hand from which they come. But intervals of quiet are requisite for thought; these are the shades that are favourable to it, the silent ones of tranquillity."

"They are favourable indeed to reflection," returned the baron, "and such as waning age at least must love."

At times the conversation was in a degree suspended by the harmony of invisible musicians, that, as it now seemed to die away amidst the woods, now to creep along the water, recalled all that had ever been heard of descending spirits.

From the pavillion they roved through the contiguous grounds. The scenery was every where beautifully diversified, the rudeness of one spot setting off the rich cultivation of another.

Lord Sebergham was every moment more delighted.

delighted. He here beheld that domestic happiness, the contemplation of which is so delightful to the feeling heart—that well-ordered home which even the vicious cannot know without something of veneration.

As the satellite of this planet seems to borrow light but for the purpose of dispersing it, so the baron and his noble dame seemed to cultivate the gifts of fortune but for the purpose of conferring happiness. Courtesy presided with a benignant sway in their mansion, and, taught by their example, their domestics were ever ready to assist the distressed, and tender the cup of hospitality to the wearied traveller.

The baron had been distinguished as a partizan of the house of York; but his attachment to his cause could not render him blind to the faults of Edward—faults that became but too glaring when there was no longer any thing to be apprehended. Disgusted by his conduct, as well as offended by the undue preference

shewn

shewn on more occasions than one to the arrogant family of the queen, he at length withdrew from court, with a fixed determination of mixing no more in its tumultuous and intriguing scenes.

But the tranquillizing effect which the contemplation of his domestic happiness was calculated to have upon the feelings, failed of producing such a one on those of the earl, owing to the conflicts excited in his mind by the admiration inspired by the beauteous Emmeline.

Deep, deep was now his regret for having exposed himself to the influence of her charms, and rushed into a temptation which every principle of honour required him to resist—" Oh why, why," a thousand times he sighed to himself, as he hung upon her smiles and dulcet accents, watched her varying blushes, and caught the lightning glance of her blue sparkling orbs, " did I place myself in such a situation? Why wilfully incur the risk of being swerved from integrity? But already am I punished for

it,

it, already by the emotion and agitation I experience."

A bell at length summoned them to a magnificent banquet in the hall. Here many a warlike trophy decorated the massy pillars, and many an antique banner waved —the eagle of imperial Rome, the white horse of the Saxon, the raven of the Dane, and the lion of England, were severally emblazoned, reviving a thousand interesting recollections. Deeds of the times they recalled were sung in heroic verse by the aged minstrels of the house, ranged in a gallery at the upper end of the hall: they sang of the valour of Arthur, the witcheries of Merlin, the cruel innovations of the Dane, and the prowess of the mighty Saxon. National enthusiasm kindled as they proceeded, and the glow of the heart was imparted to the countenance.

From the banquet lord Sebergham was conducted to another hall, similarly decorated, and where a gallant shew of neighbouring

bouring lords and ladies were collected. But though many were the daughters of beauty here assembled, there were none that could compare with the fair heiress of Trecothick. Morcar led her to a seat, and was allowed to enjoy the dangerous happiness of continuing by her.

A curtain hung at the upper end of the apartment, rising to the sound of soft music, the view of a wild romantic country was beheld.

The entertainment consisted of a youth commencing his pursuit in search of Happiness. Prudence and Pleasure joining him, severally solicit to be his guide. Fascinated by the dazzling exterior of the latter, he puts himself under her protection. The trials to which such a choice necessarily exposed him, were strikingly exemplified. At length, exhausted through their severity, he is on the point of resigning himself to despair, when he is prevented by the interposition of Patience, bringing in her right hand her gay attendant, Hope. These

calm

calm his perturbations, and assure him if he relies on Religion—a power without whose aid they declare themselves incapable of imparting any real consolation to him, he shall shortly discover the retreat of Wisdom, whose delightful office it is to conduct the wanderer to the region inhabited by Happiness. He finds her as they promised, and is led by her to the desired dome; Virtue, who presided at the entrance, giving him admission. The bright inhabitant of the place is found surrounded by the powers of innocent festivity. Cheerfulness now entering with her bugle-horn, announces a banquet prepared for his reception, and at the same time intimates a wish of being allowed to invite to it all whom Virtue should deem worthy of the distinction. This is granted; and tripping forward, she lowly bows to the earl and the lady Emmeline, and desires them, with their company, to follow.

They obeyed, and were by her seated under a magnificent canopy at the upper end of the

the table. To be thus honoured, thus associated, thrilled the heart of Morcar with transport. He forgot all that he ought to have remembered—he felt intoxicated with delight. The glow of pleasure flushed his cheek, and the now-aspiring hopes of his soul gave new fire to his eyes.

The young domestics who had performed in the allegorical piece waited on the guests, in order to add to the entertainment, by still keeping up their respective characters.

The banquet over, Cheerfulness sounded her bugle, and instantly, as if by magic, a sumptuous apartment, blazing with lights, was revealed to the view. Here the minstrels were ranged, and, to the harp's enlivening sound, youths and virgins led the dance.

But the moment for separating at length arrived: Morcar sighing at its announcement, wished it had been yet a little longer delayed, so exquisite was the pleasure he was enjoying.

On

On entering his chamber, he dismissed his attendant, too much agitated to be able to bear observation.

Here, no longer occupied in a manner to prevent them, painful reflections began again to obtrude. The result was heightened, and new regret for having voluntarily incurred the struggles he was now enduring. —"But regrets are unavailing," he suddenly exclaimed; "the past is beyond recall; but it rests with me to prevent their being heightened, by steadily adhering to integrity—by allowing no temptation to entice me to the committal of an act of cruel baseness. No, Edmund, I will not, like Fortune, mercilessly wrong thee; I will not rob thee of that for which to make thee a recompence were impossible—no, though in vain I should search for the counterpart of Emmeline. Thy Emmeline—and will it indeed be thy happy fate to call her thine—to strain to thine that breast of snow—to impress upon those roseate lips the glowing kiss of love!"

The

The vision of Savernake suddenly recurred to his thoughts; he started—a kind of horror thrilled through his veins at the recollection—" But why thus affected," he cried, " since with me it rests either to falsify or confirm the prediction—to avert or incur ruin by the manner in which I shall act?" He paused, and again almost started, fancying, at the instant, he heard a deep sigh breathed in his ear; he turned from the window at which he was standing in a meditative attitude, and glancing an eye keenly inquiring round the spacious chamber—" Spirit of my departed sire," he exclaimed, " if indeed you hover round me, weaken not my resolution by portents of evil; oh, rather strengthen it, by some happy omen of success; for he who imagines difficulties conquerable, almost ever finds them so, the timid mind still making the impossibility it fears."

CHAP. IV.

"But oh! what thought can paint that fair perfection!
Not sea-born Venus, in the courts beneath,
When the green nymphs first kiss'd her coral lips,
All polish'd, fair, and wash'd with orient beauty,
Could, in my dazzling fancy, match her brightness."

NIGHT waned apace, and at length he retired to rest; but his slumbers were disturbed—the perturbation of his mind affected his imagination. Now, in his dreams, he wandered with Emmeline through the luxuriant woods of Trecothick, listening to her gentle accents, and basking in her smiles; now suddenly found himself torn away from her by an invisible hand, and transported to savage wilds, haunted by hideous spectres.

Tormented

Tormented by these visions of the night, the cheerful sound of an early horn did not fail of making him quickly forsake his pillow. Hastily dressing, he descended to the hall, and there found the family already assembling to breakfast, prepared for the chace.

The baron deputed him to be the immediate attendant of his daughter for the day. His heart throbbed, his nerves thrilled with transport at the proud distinction, or rather at the hopes it inspired, for more than ever he felt unable to struggle with the temptation he had incurred.

The downcast look, the mantling blush with which she received the silent homage of his eyes, as he assisted her to mount her palfrey, pawing and neighing, as if proud of the lovely burthen it was destined to bear, quickened still more the pulsations of his heart, and gave a yet livelier glow to his countenance, from the construction he put on them. But in ascribing them to any thing like inconstancy towards Ed-

 mund,

mund, he wronged her; they were alone owing to virgin modesty; confused, alarmed, perhaps, by the ardour of his gaze, the feelings manifested by the tremor of his nerves as he helped her to mount.

Yet though she believed it impossible for her love for Edmund to be conquered, neither this belief, nor the consequent one of happiness being unattainable except in an union with him, could for a moment decide her on becoming his, except restored to his lineal honours; so great was her hereditary pride, so powerful the ambition of her soul.

But though her governing principles, a large portion of natural sweetness prevented any repulsive indications of them. From her looks and usual manner, it would have been supposed she was possessed of more than an usual portion of her sex's softness and bewitching tenderness.

Chance first gave the beloved Edmund to her view. Among the numerous suitors that bowed at her shrine, was an adventu-

rous

rous chief of Erin, who, driven by a storm on the Cornish coast, had, at the hospitable castle of Trecothick, obtained refuge; but the suit he preferred was alike rejected by her sire and the maid. Nowise repulsed, however, he determined on possessing himself by force of what he perceived no chance of otherwise obtaining. Accordingly, feigning to quit the neighbourhood, he continued, with his followers, lurking about the Castle for a favourable opportunity of bearing off the prize he sought. The knowledge he had obtained of the lady Emmeline being often in the habit of straying, unattended, through her native shades, first suggested the bold design he meditated. Thoughtless of danger, as, one day, soon after his departure, she wandered along the banks of a romantic stream, now stooping to gather the wild flowers that bedecked its margin, now to listen to the solemn rustling of the trees that loftily overshadowed her beauteous head, now to the plaintive notes of the stockdove thrilling through

the groves, she felt herself suddenly seized in the arms of a ruffian. Vain would have been the cries she uttered, so far had she unwittingly strayed from home, but for the interposition of Edmund. In weeping over the fallen fortunes of his house, he had unconsciously wandered from the ravaged lands of his father into the fertile ones of Trecothick, and through the intervening trees, without being perceived, had seen her approaching, the glow of youth upon her cheek, the smile of happiness on her lip, the lustre of intelligence beaming from her eye. Swift as the winged lightning, he rushed to her rescue. Scared by his unexpected appearance, the villain instantly relinquished his hold, and fled, aware of being at too great a distance to receive assistance from his fellows, if needful.

For a minute, terror deprived the affrighted maid of the power of utterance; nor when she recovered it, would dread of being again surprised permit her to waste

time

time in acknowledgments; but as, supported by her youthful deliverer, she hastened towards the Castle, her varying looks and broken sentences were eloquently expressive of what she owed him.

Tidings of what had happened preceded them to the Castle; a peasant boy had witnessed the adventure, and hasted thither to give the alarm.

In consequence, just as they reached it, they beheld the baron, with a numerous train of armed vassals, issuing from the gates.

The sudden transition from apprehension to joy was almost too much for him. His emotions, as he clasped her in his arms, with a fervent thanksgiving to Heaven for her safety, were too affecting not to excite similar ones in the bosom of the lovely maid; but her impatience to do justice to her deliverer, to obtain for him the acknowledgments of her noble sire, was too great to permit her to give way to them. Checking her tears, she recounted all she

 owed

owed him—the dreadful fate from which, to all appearance, his interference had saved her.

With his eyes intently fixed upon the noble youth, the baron kissed her fair forehead on her concluding, and tenderly consigning her to the care of her attendants, invited him to enter the Castle, and partake of refreshment. Gracefully bowing, the youth consented, flushed with new-sprung hopes.

Often had it been his recent wish, from the neglect shewn to his interest by lord Sebergham, to obtain the patronage, the friendship of some distinguished chief, and he now flattered himself this wish was about being accomplished. The high character of the baron for generosity and feeling—the gratitude he conceived he must experience for the service he had rendered his daughter, induced him to do so. But alas! who does not know how ill the eager calculations of youth agree with the careful ones of age and experience! Poor Edmund,

mund, judging of the feelings of others by the glowing ones of his own impassioned nature, already saw himself, in imagination, opening his full heart to the baron, and receiving, in return, from him, assurances of his protection and powerful interest. But had he known to what his disappointment was owing, he probably would not have felt it so severely. The truth was, he appeared too amiable in the eyes of the baron to allow him to think of encouraging him at the Castle. With a previous prejudice in his favour from gratitude, he foresaw the most unpleasant consequences likely to accrue from permitting any further acquaintance between a youth so handsome, so accomplished, so strikingly attractive, and his daughter, and therefore decided against it; unwilling she should incur the risk of forming an attachment unworthy of her, such as he conceived would be the case, should she think of her deliverer, owing to the obscure origin he was led to imagine him of, from the cau-

tious manner in which, in the first instance, Edmund had deemed it right to answer his interrogations relative to his name and lineage.

His curiosity, therefore, respecting these satisfied, his manner gradually altered; he continued, it was true, to repeat his thanks for the service he had rendered his daughter, but then it was with coldness and constraint, and without an effort to detain him longer than he evinced a wish to stay.

Galled, mortified, disappointed—his pride and sensibility alike wounded, Edmund left the Castle in a state of irritation greater than he had before ever experienced.

Almost suffocated by his emotions, he hurried on, unwilling they should be noticed; but a backward glance soon convinced him there was no fear of this, by letting him see, that no regardful eye watched his receding steps, no obsequious vassal followed.

Tears of wounded pride gushed from him—"Such would not have been the

case,"

case," in bitterness of soul he exclaimed, "had I been the acknowledged heir of the noble Lestwithiel. No, such would not have been the thanks I should have received for the service I have lately rendered; and is it because I am stripped of that which can give no real claim to kindness or esteem, I am to find myself neglected and despised? from the trifling and unworthy such conduct would not wound, but to meet with it from the reputed good and great, with disdain, with haughtiness —oh, it rives, it breaks the vulnerable heart! it bids it despair of sympathy and consolation! Oh, my parents, with what tears of anguish have I often deplored your untimely fate! but now how do I almost rejoice to think the grave shelters you from the experience of what I feel—the humiliations which fortune sunk to poverty and dependence is destined to endure! Oh that early I had been laid at rest with you! or, since destined to a longer sojourn here, enabled to forget what I once

 was,

was, or check the proud aspirings of this indignant spirit!"

Sick at heart, disgusted at the moment with life, he threw himself despairingly on the humid pavement of one of the now half-roofless halls of his native towers, to which he had again, almost unconsciously, strayed—that once happy home in which his day had opened with every promise of a glorious evening.

But what was here that did not tend to sharpen the pangs of the moment, to render more excruciating his feelings!—what that did not tend to remind him of the days of happier times, when a noble sire's care, a lovely mother's tenderness, the homage of obsequious vassals, the kindness and admiration of gallant kindred were his!

Again a kind of suffocating sensation came over him; he arose and strayed into the garden which lay contiguous, and where, through long desertion and neglect, emblem of the chequered path of life, weeds and flowers promiscuously reared

their

their heads. With difficulty he forced his way through the ruined walks, so wildly luxuriant was the growth of the entangled shrubs. On a sudden he came to a favourite arbour of his deceased mother's, still gay, though in ruin; for still the bowery clematis clung to the slender support it afforded, and the embracing honeysuckle embalmed the air around it. Here often, smiling on her knee, had the precepts of virtue been conveyed to his infant ear, in the disguise of some romantic legend, some wondrous tale, breathing astonishment.

The turbulence of indignation gave way at the subduing recollections here revived; with a sudden gush of soul-dissolving softness, he threw himself upon the ground before the entrance, and fancying he could still trace there the print of her footsteps, kissed the sod in a transport of grief and tenderness.

He raised his mournful eyes—they fell upon a luxuriant thicket of red roses; he groaned;

groaned; he cast almost a reproachful look upon the blooming flowers; he bent over them in agony—"Oh luckless was the hour, evil the day," he cried, "in which the house of Lestwithiel adopted thee for its badge!"

He knelt, he raised his humid eyes, his clasped hands to Heaven—"Oh sire, ever honoured!" he exclaimed; "oh mother, ever dear! if 'tis given to the departed to review this nether scene, consider not aught that may have escaped my full heart as reproaches on thy conduct—my actions shall ever speak my veneration for thy memory—thy well-remembered precepts shall be the guide of my life—thy example my path to the blessedness thou hast already attained. Still may implacable revenge deny me my birthright; but recollecting I am thy son, I shall act so as to force even my enemies to acknowledge me worthy of it."

A soft zephyr agitated the roses; and as it gently swayed them to and fro, the most delightful

delightful fragrance revived his languid senses.

He paused for a moment, then in an eager tone—"May I consider this presageful of future good," he cried; "of yet being recompensed for all the evils thy adoption has brought upon me!"

He plucked a half-blown one: well he remembered the thicket was planted by his mother, to commemorate a victory obtained over the Yorkists; and kissing it, in sweet and tender remembrance of her who was no more, placed it on his heart.

As his agitation subsided, his thoughts reverted to her on whose youthful cheek were blended the bright tints of the rival flowers—"Oh, how lovely in her terror!" he exclaimed; "what charms in the suppliant eye, the trembling tone with which she asked my protection to her home! Not cold and constrained, like her repulsive sire's, were her acknowledgments; but softness and sweetness are her predominating qualities," he sighed: "but will she

she be allowed to dwell upon the gratitude she deems she owes me? Oh no; the haughty baron will tell her, that on the services of the lowly the great have a claim that is not to be disputed; and that but for the performance of a duty, thanks are not merited: and shall I submit to this—to the idea of her being taught to consider me unworthy of her recollection? No, forbid it all that is proud and noble in my nature! I will seek her—seek her for the purpose of letting her know who I really am; that to me, even she, the heiress of the proud Trecothick, need not blush to own an obligation."

But how was this desired interview, so essential to his wounded feelings, to be obtained? To enter the Castle again was not to be thought of, even though satisfied an effort for the purpose would not meet with a repulse; and after what happened, there was but little likelihood of her again straying, unattended, through the grounds.

Despairing of the accomplishment of his

his wish, he relapsed into agitation; and more restless and melancholy than ever, continued to wander, till the close of day, through the ravaged grounds of his paternal domain—those ancient woods within whose deep recesses the mystic rites of druidism were once celebrated, and in which, through the romantic influence of indulged melancholy, he was now almost tempted to imagine "some spirit dwelt, who, from the chiding stream or groaning oak, still heard and answered to his moan."

But as the shrouding veil of twilight fell around, no longer could he resist the feelings that urged him again towards the Castle of Trecothick—the hope of again, in some way or other, catching a glimpse of her; but in vain; by various stratagems he obtained a view into several of the apartments, lit up in a manner to render them distinctly seen; the object he sought was not visible.

More than once had he taken the circuit of the building, when in a remote wing, but

but duskily illumined by a ray from one solitary window, the low sound of a harp induced him to believe he had discovered the immediate chamber she occupied.

Eagerly he looked around him, but, alas! here was no convenient, no commanding eminence to ascend; but love, new-born love, is ingenious in expedients; from the side of the window a low battlemented wall extended some distance, and up this, aided by the projection of a buttress, he clambered, and found himself sufficiently elevated to obtain the view he desired.

As he imagined, the apartment of which he thus obtained an insight was one of those immediately appropriated to the fair Emmeline, and in which, as he hoped, he now beheld her.

She was alone, and seated at the harp, but, from her abstracted air, evidently more for the purpose of resting on it than of playing; yet now and then the vibrating chords emitted a sound, but it was unconnected

nected and murmuring, low and trembling, as the soft whispers of fearful love in the ear of the beloved—"Oh, whence this thoughtfulness?" sighed the impassioned Edmund. "Ah, that I knew to what cause is owing the pensiveness that shades that lovely brow!"

Instantly he gazed; never had beauty appeared so fascinating to him; yet its usual glow mantled not the soft cheek of the youthful Emmeline; but its paleness, the evident paleness of thought, gave an interest to her countenance beyond all the glowing tints of beauty to confer.

The careless folds of her light flowing drapery, the negligence with which her shining hair was allowed to shade one polished cheek, as inclined towards the harp, gave an appearance of still greater pensiveness to her air.

Suddenly she rose, and approached the window, which lay open. Shrinking behind a projection of the wall, Edmund was concealed from her view, but without being

ing prevented still observing her. He saw her bend from the casement—he saw her look earnestly towards the spot where it had been his good fortune to rescue her, and softly sigh. Ah, what were the emotions which this look, this sigh, imparted to his heart! With difficulty could he control them—with difficulty could he suppress an answering sigh, or refrain from seizing the present opportunity to prefer the entreaty he had to make; but a dread of being deemed presumptuous, of offending, of irreparably injuring himself in her opinion, by allowing himself to be discovered in such a place, interposed to check him.

Well was he aware that in a breast like hers the flame of love must be fanned with gentleness; that the slightest shadow of presumption would damp it, the least degree of boldness for ever extinguish it.

But to tear himself from the spot while she remained visible was beyond his power, nor even then could he quit it without reluctance.

He

He left it, more anxious than ever for an opportunity of again addressing her; but of obtaining this his hope gradually diminished.

Alarmed by the danger she had escaped, the baron for some days restricted her from going beyond the immediate confines of the Castle. At length, one morning, led to believe, from the languishing hue of her cheek, that she required exercise, and having pretty well satisfied himself that the planners of the late bold enterprise had quitted the neighbourhood, he permitted her to ride out, attended by her squire and two trusty vassals.

Not entirely, however, to the cause he imputed it to was the fading of the rose upon her cheek owing. The idea of no more beholding her youthful deliverer, or rather of his being in a station to render a wish to that effect unworthy of her, excited sensations that robbed her bosom of its usual quietude.

The promptness with which he flew to her

her rescue—the rapture he evinced at effecting it—the animating fire of his eyes—the alluring sweetness of his countenance—the seductive softness of his accents—the striking gracefulness of his form, all combined to make an impression on her she felt almost to be indelible.

But much as gratitude demanded from her, infected by the strong prejudices of hereditary pride, she could not, without blushing, think of the interest he had inspired her with, on being led to believe, from the report of the baron, that he was a youth alike unknown to fame or fortune.

Scarcely knowing whether she most feared or wished to behold him again, she slowly rode on till she had got to some distance from home, when a violent storm coming on, she quickened her speed, for the purpose of taking shelter in the deserted Castle of Lestwithiel, which just then appeared in view.

Her squire followed close upon the heels of her palfrey; but the horse of one of her

her other attendants, frightened by the lightning, which, in vivid sheets, flashed every moment across the path, took a contrary direction, and was instinctively followed by his comrade's.

The violence of the storm prevented lady Emmeline or her squire from knowing they were not followed, until they had gained the shelter they sought.

The discovery occasioned some vexation, it having been their intention to dispatch one of the men to the Castle for a covered car, in order to reconvey her back to it.

The expediency of procuring this, from the increasing violence of the rain, becoming every moment more apparent, the highly-disconcerted squire having secured the horses, and conducted his lady to a place where she was completely sheltered, proposed going in quest of some peasant to be the bearer of a message for it.

After a long hesitation, the lady Emmeline acquiesced in the proposal, under the presumption that he would not be long absent;

absent; and that, as the horses were in a covered place, there was no likelihood of her being discovered there.

But scarce had he left her, ere the sudden recurrence of her thoughts to the recent danger she had so narrowly escaped, occasioned such a sensation of terror, at finding herself alone, as would have impelled her to run after him, had she known the direction he took.

Obliged, from her ignorance of this, to remain where she was, she continued in a listening attitude, ready to fly at the first intimation of danger.

Narrow windows in the side of the apartment she was in gave light to one of the staircases. As her eyes wandered about, they accidentally fell upon one of these, and, with an emotion of irrepressible terror, she caught a glimpse of a human countenance, earnestly regarding her through one of the dusky panes. With a wild shriek, that echoed through the building, she instantly attempted to fly, but was prevented

prevented by the sudden seizure of her robe. Again shrieking, she was sinking to the ground, under the idea of being lost, when the voice, the harmonious voice, of her gallant deliverer recalled her fleeting senses.

Uncovering her eyes, which, in terror, she had veiled with her hands, she beheld him at her feet.—" Ah, pardon !" he cried, on meeting her half-fearful, half-wondering glance, " pardon the alarm I have given ! but to resist making use of an opportunity I had so earnestly desired, was beyond my power."

The heart of Emmeline throbbed with new alarms ; she dreaded a disclosure that might compel her to harshness—compel her to give pain to a person to whom she was so much indebted.

Confused, embarrassed, scarcely conscious of what she did, she turned to a dismantled window, under the pretext of looking for her squire.

" Ah, be not so impatient for his return !"

turn!" cried the impassioned Edmund; "too short will it render the minute I have so ardently longed for."

He paused; but lady Emmeline affecting not to hear him, continued to look from the window.

"So disdainful!" he reproachfully exclaimed, after the silence of a few moments. "Ah, unhappy wretch! am I then doomed to have the cruel reverse of fortune I experience aggravated by finding it the means of closing every ear against me?"

Emmeline started, and turned hastily towards him—"Yes, lady," in a soul-penetrating tone he added, with a countenance in which it were difficult to say whether grief or indignation most predominated, "well am I aware that this cold disdain is owing to an opinion of my being presumptuous in thus addressing you—an opinion originating in an idea of the inferiority of my rank; but, lady, thy smiling prospects, forlorn and friendless as I now am,

am, are not more dazzling than once were mine. Of these towers, these strong holds, I was once——"

More he was prevented uttering by the unwelcome appearance of the almost-drowned squire winding up the hill at the moment. An impatient gesture of lady Emmeline's giving him to comprehend what she wished, Edmund hastily retreated, but not without having the happiness of thinking the regret of the moment was mutual.

In no little pet, and shaking his dripping doublet and cap, the squire entered, protesting, instead of a shower, one would be tempted to suppose it was a second deluge that had fallen, in which every living creature, at least every human one, was swallowed up, as in no direction had he been able to find any person to be the bearer of the intended message to the Castle.

"Well, thou must e'en go thyself, good Godfrey," said the lady Emmeline, with a look of smiling complacency, by no means

calculated to restore him to good temper, from the little sympathy it seemed to manifest for the doleful plight he was in.

"Nay, lady, I am already so drenched, that if I thought," anxiously examining the sky as he spoke, "the rain was likely soon to give over, I should pray to be excused, for, by our lady, a dry skin is almost as comfortable as a whole one."

"But there is not the least likelihood," said the lady Emmeline impatiently; "dost not see that fresh clouds are gathering in the west. Come, come, good Godfrey, don't delay."

"But, lady, art thou not frightened at the thoughts of being left so long by thyself in such a solitary place as this, as must be the case, should I obey thee?"

"Oh no, I have no longer any terror on that account!"

"How marvellously courageous all of a sudden!" muttered the surprised Godfrey to himself, who, from being an old greyheaded domestic, was allowed greater privileges

vileges than would otherwise have been the case, and who, according as his humour varied, was argumentative, obstinate, or facetious. "Well, lady, though I know not what has reconciled you to the thought, I must now be candid enough to tell you what I did not like to do before, when, in a manner, there was a necessity for leaving you a little while alone, I deem it dangerous for you to remain here by yourself. Who knows but at this very moment some one of your suitors may be lurking within these walls, impatiently watching for my departure to appear before you?"

Lady Emmeline blushed to the eyes.—"What strange suggestions are thine, Godfrey! I cannot choose but laugh at such a thought entering thy head."

"Ah ha, so I perceive! I see it tickles your fancy. It were a good joke, in sooth, if some enamoured young knight were only waiting for me to be gone, to come and throw himself at thy feet."

"Well, well, I'll run the chance, for the

the longer thou delayest going, the longer I must remain here; and remember thou needs not return; the buttery will be the most comfortable place for thee to haste to; and to guard against cold, let Maudlin lose no time in making thee a good sack posset."

"Truly such good advice is not to be neglected," said Godfrey, with a nod of approbation. "I will away, and send the wain hither with all possible expedition."

Scarce was he out of sight, when the consciousness of the motive that had rendered her so impatient for his departure produced such an effect on the feelings of lady Emmeline, as to induce her to attempt calling him back.

But she failed in her effort for the purpose; and ere she could repeat it, Edmund again stood before her. To say whose cheek was dyed with the deepest tinge, as their eyes again encountered, were impossible. The roseate blush of confusion gave her new charms in his eyes, and

and perhaps the animated one of pleasure did not render him less amiable in hers. But the moments were too precious to be wasted in looks of silent admiration. To miss the present opportunity of revealing himself, and perhaps another would not occur—an idea that acted as a stimulus to his natural impetuosity, so injurious to his hopes did he conceive allowing her to remain ignorant of his birth likely to prove.

Urged by this consideration, he quickly resumed the recital which had been suspended, and briefly disclosed who he was; following the disclosure by an impulsive declaration of the motive that impelled him to make it.

Tumultuous were the feelings excited in the bosom of his fair auditor by the communication. Surprise, pity, and pleasure, alike pervaded and agitated them. To learn his cruel reverse of fortune, without commiseration, was impossible; and equally was

it so to find, that the idea which she could not easily exclude, was one she might dwell on without any feeling of self-degradation.

His looks, his manner, the likeness which the baron had carelessly, or rather involuntarily observed to her he discovered between him and the late earl of Lestwithiel, all conspired to prevent a doubt of the veracity of his statement.

But though, from the acknowledgment of his rank, she could no longer feel humbled in her own eyes by the prepossession she had yielded to respecting him, yet so thoroughly was she persuaded, that as the proscribed heir of Lestwithiel, her kindred would never sanction his addresses to her, so thoroughly, that she herself could never be reconciled to the relinquishment of the honours their acceptance must occasion, that ere the bright glow of fugitive rapture had well faded on her cheek, her looks altered towards him.

The

The impassioned youth, partly surmising the cause, threw himself again, in an agony of apprehended disappointment, at her feet.

"Oh, I ask not," he cried, "aught that due consideration for yourself can forbid! The holy saints are witness I would not wish you a partaker of my present lot; all I desire, all I implore, is permission to hope, that should the resoration of my lineal honours be obtained, I may not supplicate the lovely daughter of lord Trecothick in vain for a return of the passion she has inspired."

"For the restoration you allude to, you have my best wishes," returned the secretly-agitated Emmeline, with forced reserve: "More, what is due to others, as well as myself, will not permit me to grant."

"What, when all I ask is a conditional hope? when solemnly I swear to voluntarily relinquish it, should my suit to the king prove unavailing? A short time must determine that; and oh, with what new elo-

quence shall I be endued to prosecute it, should what I now solicit be obtained!"

The resolution of Emmeline began to falter; yet not so much through any arguments Edmund had the power of advancing, as the persuasive energy of his impassioned tones, the language of his pleading eyes, the heightened interest imparted to his appearance by emotion.

Yet still did maiden modesty, that shrinking delicacy that is inseparable from it, an innate and inherent sense of propriety, prevent the hope he required. They did not, however, part in a manner to occasion him absolutely to despair.

Unable to think of aught but this interview, now accusing herself of too much reserve, now of too much complaisance, Emmeline felt herself deprived of her usual tranquillity. On retiring to her chamber for the night, instead of immediately repairing to rest, she dismissed her attendant, and pensively seated herself at a window, that,

that, looking down a steep valley into the awful woods of the domain, with the Tamar glittering in the moonlight among them, presented a scene at once soothing and solemn to her view.

Opening the casement, to enjoy it more at large, and inhale the delicious freshness of the tempered air, loaded with the sweets of blossomed fields, and gardens, the end of the veil she had carelessly thrown over her blew out, and as she attempted to draw it back, she found it detained. Bending forward to see in what it had caught, she beheld a shadowy figure, half-concealed by the battlements of the wall, that, extending immediately from the side of the window, united the part of the building she was in to one of the outer towers. But the exclamation of terror that was bursting from her lips, the voice of Edmund prevented. Starting forward, with the veil yet in his hand, which, as it had blown over his face, he could not resist the temptation

of catching and pressing to his lips, he conjured her pardon for appearing there.

The motive that occasioned his being so was too obvious and too flattering to the fair heiress not to prevent that displeasure his imprudence might otherwise have excited: yet was he chidden for it, and commanded to be gone; but the command was issued in tones too gentle to be instantly obeyed; and the conversation that ensued, broken as it was, had the effect of heightening the emotions he had previously inspired.

Yielding to these, she could not refrain from again expressing the pity his story had excited, or regretting her utter inability to serve him; still, however, the promise he solicited was denied; but at length perseverance, or rather the effect produced upon her mind by succeeding interviews, obtained it for him.

Continually hovering about her, he found means of frequently conversing with her;

her; and in these repeated conferences failed not of recommending himself still more strongly to her esteem; in consequence, she could not, at length, hear of his being about departing, without being induced to grant him the hope he had before solicited in vain. The kind of softening melancholy, of pensive tenderness, imparted to her feelings by the solemnity of the hour in which this last conversation took place, aided not a little in disposing her to lend a propitious ear to him.

"Gently the moon dispers'd her pleasing light,
And silver'd o'er the trembling lucid wave;
Fair was the view that hail'd the wand'ring sight,
And soft the pleasure midnight silence gave."

"Here then," said she, taking a locket from her lovely neck, and giving it into his eager yet trembling hand, "is a pledge of the esteem, without which, in vain you would have solicited the hope you ask—but a hope which, remember, is but conditional;

ditional; for, be assured, no arguments, no entreaties, will be able to induce me to swerve further from the respect due to those to whom nature has given unalienable authority over me."

Every assurance she could desire was given her by the enraptured youth. Pressing the locket, with all the fervour of glowing love, to his lips—"Oh, as a holy relique," with uplifted eyes, "will I guard this!" he cried; "and as I prove worthy of the confidence it implies, may Heaven only crown my wishes!"

The youthful Emmeline could not witness the transport she had inspired without participating in it; but it was a transport only without alloy till she had leisure for reflection. When she came to review her recent conduct, it filled her with equal astonishment and regret, so rash, so unadvised, so indiscreet, did it appear. How she could have been tempted to swerve so widely from the path of filial duty filled her

her with amazement, now that she was no longer exposed to those energetic pleadings that had seduced her from it.

Yielding to the self-upbraidings her promise occasioned, she meditated recalling it; but ah, if her confidence was misplaced, would this speedy retraction of it be of avail to save her fame from injury? and if, on the contrary, as her enamoured imagination still represented him, the youth was indeed worthy of it, would not such a proceeding, the cruel distrust it would intimate of his honour, be an indelible wound to his generous spirit? Oh yes. The result of her deliberations, therefore, was, a decision to abide calmly the consequences of what she had done—a decision, it must be allowed, love had no little influence in causing her to form; but framed as he was, in the prodigality of nature, with every look beaming intelligence, every accent breathing tenderness, Edmund was not a being to be coldly regarded, or easily

easily expelled from the heart in which he had entrenched himself.

This decision had a kind of tranquillizing effect upon her perturbed spirits. Delightful were the day-dreams that resulted from it—dreams in which she beheld the youthful heir of Lestwithiel restoring his hereditary home to all its ancient splendour, and to their native fields recalling the scattered vassals of his house—in which she beheld herself uniting with him, in diffusing happiness around, and heard again the feast, the tilt, the tournament, proclaimed within the massive walls.

Yet now and then a shade of thoughtfulness rested on her brow at the idea of what the baron and baroness would feel, should they ever discover her having abused the confidence it was their fond pride to think they might safely repose in her.

Next to the secret possessor of her heart, she deemed lord Sebergham more worthy of notice than any one she had yet seen; but

but neither the refinement of his language, his courtly manners, nor the graces of his person, could permit her to receive the attentions he paid her with pleasure, from the apprehensions they inspired.

Had she known of the connexion subsisting between him and Edmund, she would doubtless have been induced *to* attribute the particularity of his manner to another motive than the real one; but ignorant as she was of this, Edmund, from his uncertainty as to the ultimate issue of events, deeming it but prudent, for the present, to remain silent on some particulars, she could not avoid ascribing it to the right one, and therefore feeling alarmed; convinced, that though there was no danger of her inclinations being forced, still to refuse so distinguished an alliance as lord Sebergham's, could not fail of subjecting her to censure.

His heightened attentions, or rather still more ardent looks of admiration, this morning, had the effect of strengthening the

fear

fear she had conceived, and of course of increasing her uneasiness. The chace was too cruel a sport for her to take pleasure in; accordingly the indulgent father, relinquishing it sooner than he otherwise intended, led the way to the banks of the stream in the valley, where alighting from their horses, they entered a barge previously prepared for them, and were rowed a considerable way up the woods. As they proceeded, a sudden inclination of the vessel to one side alarming Emmeline, she involuntarily caught the arm of the earl, who sat beside her. The faint pressure of her hand communicated a sensation of the most agitating rapture to his feelings. His dark eyes sought hers, and as, with humid lustre, they beamed on her, seemed to swear eternal adoration to her at the moment.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

" Torment of mind, oh, feeble Virtue, hence
I blow thee from the palace to the cottage,
To build in hearts of hinds; bless their rude hands
With thy lean recompence of endless labour;
For me, since I have burst th' ungrateful chain,
That held me to thee like a shackled slave,
I will enjoy whate'er the gods have given."

BUT far was she from being flattered by their silent homage. Confused, and shrink- from his ardent gaze, she hastily averted her looks from him.

Winding amidst deeply-indented banks, the stream now widened, now contracted; here the birch and pensile willow dipped their hanging branches in the water—here the majestic oak and spreading beech reared on

on high their proud heads above it, now darkening it by the deep shadow of their gigantic bodies, now receding, as if to give full scope for the reflection of the azure sky. At length it expanded, and a small island appeared in view, beautifully embellished with shrubs. Here they landed, and repairing to a grotto in the centre of it, were greeted, on their entrance, by some of the domestics, habited as recluses, and who, on a white flag, that served as a table, displayed their pretended store.

The grotto was lined with moss, and tufted on the outside with shrubs and flowers, amongst which the rich ones of the balmy honeysuckle were the most conspicuous. Dark masses of shade, in some places, hid the narrow limits of the island, while in others, over undulating lawns of velvet smoothness, the eye beheld its indented banks laved by the stream.

All seemed enchantment to Morcar; till now he felt as if he had never known real pleasure.

Smiling

Smiling at the enthusiasm with which he expressed himself—"May not something," said the baron, "be attributed to novelty? variable and inconstant in our tastes, do we not find a charm in whatever is new, merely from the circumstance of its being so?"

"Perhaps so," returned Morcar; "but the pleasures here experienced are not such as require novelty to recommend them, since they are such as must ever be grateful to real taste and feeling."

"In this way," resumed the baron, "I contrive to vary the domestic scene, for I am not one of those who conceive it unnecessary to diversify it. The state in which man was originally placed announces it to be the benevolent intention of Heaven that he should enjoy pleasure, else never would he have awakened to existence in Paradise. One of the greatest of the ancient orators, in endeavouring to reclaim his son from a vicious course of life, desired to be understood as not speaking against

against those innocent diversions that unbend the mind, since a bow always bent is soon broken, and the imbecility of our nature renders recreation necessary, but merely against that profligacy that at once corrupts and weakens it."

Alas! Morcar was unable to attend to the lore of wisdom; the conflicts of his mind becoming every moment more painful, rendered him unable to pay real attention to any thing.

Gradually he felt the resolves of principle giving way to the powerful temptation to which he had exposed himself.

He tried to believe that the silence of Edmund, relative to his attachment, was an excuse for the treachery he meditated against him; that what he had not thought proper to confide to him, he was justified in acting as if ignorant of; but the heart that has once acknowledged the laws of integrity cannot easily shake off their restraints.

Though

Though often dissolute in his conduct, owing to the little attention the troublesome times had permitted his father to pay to his early years, never yet had Morcar actually committed an act calculated to kindle the blush of lasting shame upon his cheek.

But he was not long destined to enjoy the consolation derived from this reflection. The lapse of a few more days terminated the indecision that had so distracted his mind, by determining him to make an overture for the hand of the too beauteous Emmeline.

But to hope to gain it, without inducing her to believe the prospects of her lover hopeless, he conceived impossible, and accordingly resolved on a falsehood for the furtherance of his wishes.

An opportunity was not long wanting to carry this resolve into effect. A splendid banquet one day in the hall, was succeeded by athletic sports without the castle. While the gallant chieftains contended in various

ways,

ways, the courtly dames, who also graced the feast, paraded through the shady walks, or collected in applauding groups round the gay competitors, and the aged minstrels, seated in the full glare of the setting sun, beneath oaks that had sheltered the bards of other days, seemed, as smiling they surveyed the scene, to catch the strain of inspiration from it.

Morcar, intent but on one object, artfully contrived to keep at a distance from the competitors, and gradually detach the fair heiress of Trecothick from her companions; perceiving the effect his obtrusive attentions had on her, for the last day he had altered his manner, and thus found no difficulty in obtaining an opportunity of conversing with her apart; for divested of an apprehension of his having any serious design respecting her, as by this artful procedure she was, she wished to encourage conversation with him, so amusing did she find him, from the courtly scenes he had mixed in.

Amusing her with a new detail of these, he contrived to lead her imperceptibly to a distance from the guests.

Suddenly raising her eyes, which for some time, as they proceeded, had been cast upon the ground, Emmeline started at finding herself before the Castle of Lestwithiel. Stepping back, she would instantly have returned, but for the insidious Morcar. Gently laying his hand upon her arm—" Yet a moment, lady, let me gaze," he said. " How impressive the venerable grandeur of this pile!—how afflicting the thought of such magnificence being abandoned to decay! for never will the splendour of those towers be revived."

Again lady Emmeline started, and looked wistfully in his face; but to relieve her from the cruel suspense he had excited was not his immediate intention.

From examining his looks, she involuntarily cast her eyes upon the building. A chilling sensation pervaded her feelings at the air of melancholy which the cold pur-

ple hue of declining day imparted to its aspect. The shattered windows, a door here and there flapping to and fro, the stream that wound round the hill on which it stood, as if to gain a secure covert in the dusky woods that stretched behind, rustling solemnly in the breeze of night, with the owl hooting in the ancient towers, did not tend to lessen this sensation.

" Yes," resumed the earl, after an artful pause, calculated to give effect to what he had previously said, " of the restoration of the lineal honours of the family to which it belonged, not the smallest hope remains. All that interest could do has already been exerted in vain; and either the unhappy heir must be content to continue here in a state of dependence, bordering on vassalage, or else seek, in another kingdom, for those honours he may be ambitious of attaining."

" Is the royal wrath so very, very unappeasable?" with a pale and quivering lip demanded

demanded the embarrassed and cruelly-agitated Emmeline.

A profound sigh was the reply.

Her head drooped; and despite of her efforts to restrain them, a few tears of mortification and regret fell from her—"It gets cold," said she, as tremblingly she drew her veil still closer round her head, for the purpose of concealing her emotion from the evidently keenly-penetrating observation of her companion.

But he was too artful to appear to notice this; resuming the air of unconcern with which they had been conversing, he again attempted to engage her in conversation as they retraced their way back.

But the effort was unavailing; the whole soul of Emmeline was absorbed in regret and melancholy; and the instant they came within sight of the Castle, she almost started from his side, for the purpose of taking refuge in her chamber. But the feelings that hurried her to it were not calmed by the recollections here awakened.

 At

At the window at which almost unconsciously she stationed herself, the impassioned farewell of Edmund had been received. Almost expecting again to behold him there, she bent forward; but no animated form again started to view from behind the decaying battlement—no harmonious voice met her ear; a gloomy shadow was cast by the building upon the spot where he had stood; and the long grass that sprung in tufts from amidst the crevices of the stonework, whistled in the wind.

"Alas, unfortunate!" she cried, "and are all thy gay visions then dissolved in air? is it thy hapless destiny to eat the bitter bread of dependence here, or else become an alien from the land of thy forefathers? But why, since disappointed in his expectations, why not return, as in that case expected, the pledge of her conditional promise? Ah, should he keep it, instigated by love or ambition, for the purpose of enforcing the performance of that promise, what should she do?"

Though

Though she acknowledged him one of the most interesting of human beings, yet even with him to share an inglorious destiny was more than she could calmly think of.

The adulation and splendour to which, from infancy, she had been accustomed, had rendered her too aspiring to enable her to bear the idea of sinking into obscurity; and yet greatly she feared she was destined to this, should Edmund make any open pretensions to her hand; since, notwithstanding his inherent ambition, she knew her father to be so strict with regard to female delicacy, that she could scarcely doubt his deeming it but a proper attention to her fame to compel her to an union with him, if ever acquainted with the circumstance, to whom she had allowed a midnight conference.

Oh, in what a cruel, what an embarrassing dilemma did she find herself! How could she extricate herself from it? She saw no other way than by accepting the addresses of another. Yet revolting was

the idea to every feeling of delicacy and sensibility. Yet better she felt she could endure it, than that of losing her rank in life—of becoming the, perhaps, wandering wife of a banished man.

What she had so lately dreaded she now almost wished the case, namely, an intention on the part of the wily Sebergham to propose for her.

Her cheek flushed with agitation, her mind a perfect chaos, she obeyed the summons to the hall, where innumerable tapers dissipated the gloom that by this time prevailed over the lower world.

Too deeply interested not to be observant, Sebergham soon perceived the agitation she was in, and from the fixed, the musing earnestness with which, from time to time, she unconsciously regarded him, partly surmised what was passing in her mind.

To neglect urging an advantage was not in the nature of Sebergham; ere the lapse of the ensuing day, he resolved on making known

known his wishes to the baron. Accordingly, requesting an early audience of him, he entreated his sanction to the passion inspired by the lovely Emmeline.

The baron, who, from the observations he had made, had expected something of this kind, calmly and frankly replied, he had his permission to woo her; but more he must not expect, should his suit prove unpleasing.

Satisfied with this, the earl eagerly inquired for her, and was directed by one of her maids to a favourite arbour to which she had early repaired.

Clustering trees of varied verdure, shade softly melting into shade, screened it from distant observation; a little rivulet chimed sweetly over a pebbly bed before it; and all through the trellis-work, and over the entrance, honeysuckles and roses were entwined and hung, rendering it a fit retreat for love and tenderness.

Hither her harp had been conveyed; but as on the night the adventurous Edmund

climbed the battlement to gaze upon her, it stood nearly neglected. But from the deep abstraction that occasioned it to be so, she was roused the instant she beheld the advancing form of Sebergham. Struck with an idea of the motive that was leading him towards her, she started from her seat, and yielding to the impulse of the moment, would probably have fled, but for the impetuosity with which he darted forward.

Prevented from escaping, she dropt trembling on a seat, and almost fainting, listened to the recent conversation that had passed between him and the baron.

Her fate, placed, as it were, in her own power, she trembled to decide. Had she been divested of apprehensions respecting Edmund, her indecision would soon have been over; but fearful he might not so soon relinquish his hopes relative to her, as she now wished, she felt almost tempted to accept the present overture, as the most effectual method she could devise for silencing them; for once to hear of her having

having accepted the addresses of another, and wounded pride, she believed would prevent Edmund retaining a thought of her. But when she reflected on the indirect promise she had given, of considering herself engaged to him, so long as the pledge of her regard was retained, she could not avoid accusing herself of baseness for the wavering she now permitted. To wait, however, till honourably freed from it, was incurring such a risk of being compelled to fulfil it, as made her shrink from the idea. The conflict between love and pride, principle and ambition, was too great to be calmly endured. Covering her face with her hands, she remained some minutes utterly regardless of her kneeling suitor.

Alarmed by her emotions, her hesitation, the naturally impetuous Morcar became still more urgent. Starting at the vehemence of his importunities, she half looked up, and sighing deeply, as if only then awakened to a perception of them, falter-

ingly said, that the respect due to the wishes of her father would not permit her utterly to reject a suit which had received his sanction; but that the assurance of this was all that must at present be expected from her.

This was all the impassioned Morcar, with sincerity, declared he at present desired; for ere he attempted to attain the final consummation of his wishes, he deemed it expedient to remove Edmund from the kingdom, in order to prevent any danger of his perfidy being discovered.

Somewhat soothed by this assurance, the agitated Emmeline, after wiping away a few straying tears of deep regret for what alarmed pride had impelled her to, permitted the enraptured lover to lead her back to the Castle.

At the entrance, they were met by the anxious father, the most fervent wish of whose paternal heart was now for the happy settlement of his beloved child ere Heaven called him from her. Her approach with

with the earl permitted him not to doubt the result of his overture being favourable. Yielding to the satisfaction inspired by the belief, he grasped his hand—" Never," said he, " have I yet departed from sincerity; I attempt not, therefore, to conceal the heartfelt pleasure I derive from the thought of the union I now see likely to take place. But though the illustrious birth of the gallant Sebergham, and the high estimation in which he stands with his sovereign, render, even to our ancient house, the idea of an alliance with him almost flattering, yet were these his only recommendations, although assuredly indispensable, he would have failed of obtaining the sanction he required; but assured of his worth, freely has it been accorded."

Lady Trecothick entered at this moment; tears sparkled in her eyes, and her white hand was extended.

" No longer, noble Sebergham," she said, " could I restrain my impatience to

assure you, that the sentiments of my lord on this occasion are mine. Like him, persuaded of your worth, I have no hesitation in declaring the satisfaction I feel at the thought of confiding to your care the happiness of my only and beloved child."

Confused beyond the power of utterance, by the consciousness that converted these praises into reproaches, Morcar could no otherwise reply to them, than by bending his knee, and kissing the fair hand thus extended to him.

Attributing his emotion to grateful sensibility, lady Trecothick raising him with a benignant smile, conducted him to an inner apartment, whither Emmeline, relapsing into agitation at the sight of her father, had retreated. Her tears, her tremor, the wavering colour of her cheek, all gave a pang to the too conscious heart of Morcar, but a pang which was spared her parents from their unsuspicion of the real cause of her emotion. Attributing it to that tender regret which the affectionate heart

heart cannot avoid experiencing at the thought of even a temporary estrangement from its native connexions, they alternately folded her in their embrace. Composure restored, the earl delayed not mentioning the necessity of his immediate departure for court, in order to obtain the permission of the king for his longer absence from it, convinced that he should feel as if standing on the edge of a precipice, till he had taken measures for freeing himself from all apprehensions respecting Edmund.

The motive he urged for directly departing was too plausible a one to permit it to be suspected. Accordingly he had the satisfaction of quitting the Castle, with an assurance that immediately on his return to it, preparations should commence for his nuptials.

In devising a plan for relieving himself from all apprehensions relative to Edmund, he was not long at a loss; in right of his deceased mother, a French heiress, he was lord of an ancient castle in one of the

southern

southern provinces of France, and thither he proposed having him inveigled and confined.

A contrivance for the purpose of effecting his plan was readily thought of; and full of the most sanguine hopes of success, he speeded on his journey.

But elated as he was, not without a thrill of horror could he find himself again within the gloomy shades of Savernake, owing to the recollection of what had there occurred, or rather of the partial fulfilment of the terrific prediction.

But in his reviving impatience to execute his plan, he soon lost sight of every other consideration. As he imagined, he found Edmund some days returned from his mission before him.

Scarcely allowing himself to receive the particulars the other was anxious to impart —"Something, my dear Edmund, has occurred during your absence," he began, "that reduces me to the necessity of again putting your friendship to the test—a friendship

friendship for which, however, I hope I shall yet be able to prove myself not ungrateful."

"By taxing it," replied the noble youth, with all the energetic ardour of his character, "and thus affording me an opportunity of evincing my gratitude, you add to the obligations already conferred."

Smiling at his enthusiasm, perhaps his credulity—"In right of my deceased mother," proceeded the earl, "I believe you are aware of my possessing considerable domains in France. One of the remote possessors of these, in preparing for a crusade, in the time of Louis, surnamed the Saint, thought fit, as a guard against future contingencies, to bury a large portion of valuables, consisting of coin, massy plate, and jewels, in his habitation; but lest it should be his destiny not to return, committed the particulars of what he had done to paper, and with a strict injunction to give it to his next heir, in case of his death, delivered the important document into the

care of the abbot of a neighbouring monastery.

"Like his royal master, he fell a victim to the unhealthiness of a burning clime, a short time previous to which event, his friend the abbot also paid his debt of nature. His death was so sudden, that he had not time to mention the place in which this paper, together with several others of immediate consequence to the community, were deposited, owing to which, a considerable period elapsed without its discovery; but a dispute lately arising about the right of the house to a certain grant, made ages ago, the minute search that in consequence took place into all the old repositories of deeds and settlements, was the means of at length bringing it to light.

"The superior only delayed till the perusal of it had instructed him how to act, sending it to me, to whom, through the casualties of time, had devolved all right to the property it mentioned. The holy monk deputed to deliver it to me was taken

taken ill immediately after landing at Dover; and soon finding there was no hope of his recovery, dispatched a special messenger to request my immediate presence. I obeyed the summons, and from his hand received the document. Here it is," he added, producing a moth-eaten and discoloured paper, which had actually been delivered into the hands of his father many years back, in the manner in which he now pretended it was given to him, and had been the means of putting him in possession of considerable riches; "though much injured by time, yet still sufficient of the writing is legible to prevent any difficulty in discovering the exact spot in which the property is concealed. See here," he said, submitting it to the examination of Edmund, and pointing with his finger to the place, "it says, in a dark nook of the chapel, beneath a monumental stone, graved with the figure of an armed knight, and immediately adjoining an old wooden tomb, inscribed in the year 1205, to

to the memory of a count De Chalons and his lady, it lies buried. Now as it is utterly impossible for me to obtain it in person, without explaining to the king the motives of the journey, which I have the most urgent reasons for not wishing to do; and as I fear, in a matter of such consequence, to employ any one but a person on whose fidelity I know I may confidently rely, the further proof of regard I have to solicit from you is your undertaking the business for me. To require this I should be still more unwilling than I am, but for the opportunity your compliance with my request will afford you of gratifying the curiosity and thirst for knowledge you possess. The castle which hides the treasure lies on the banks of the Rhone; hence, from the length of the journey, you will have an opportunity of seeing a considerable part of France, and of course many places rendered interesting by tradition, in particular, the fields where our famed ancestors gained such distinguished fame—

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the fields of Cressy and of Agincourt, where an Edward and a Henry immortalized themselves—where the exulting father of the former, confident in the prowess of his blood, stood aloof to let the gallant youth evince his meriting the tokens of his newly-conferred knighthood. By the holy saints," continued the wily Sebergham, perceiving the cheek of Edmund kindling with the flame of rising enthusiasm, "I envy thee the feelings the review must excite."

"They will be deserving of envy indeed," returned Edmund; "but when shall I away?"

"You consent, then, to oblige me?"

"Consent!" emphatically repeated Edmund; "could you doubt it?"

"Not the zeal that would urge you to do so; but then I feared," musingly regarding him, "shall I freely acknowledge? that a dread of injury to your own interest might prevent you—a dread which I now assure you would be unnecessary, since it

is

is my fixed intention to advocate your cause during your absence."

"Then did I feel the hesitation you were fearful of, this assurance would instantly remove it, for on your word my reliance is firm."

Morcar slightly inclining his head, hastily averted it, to hide the confusion this unmerited declaration excited. The guilty consciousness of his soul suffused his cheeks with a burning glow, and for a few minutes he was unable to encounter the eyes of Edmund again.

Then a little recovering himself—"Your departure shall not be delayed then," he said, "since the sooner you set out, the sooner I may hope to see you again; and as the company of a person acquainted with the country must be preferable to that of any other, I purpose that Hardwicke, who is a native of France, shall be your attendant."

All necessary preliminaries being adjusted, at an early hour the ensuing day the

the deceived youth set out, accompanied by the confidant and abettor of Morcar's intended villainy, and whose brother was steward of the castle whither he was going.

But though he could not help rejoicing at the success of his contrivance, yet not without some compunctious feelings could Morcar behold him depart, or reflect on the utter violation of his solemn promise respecting him to his deceased father.

Such were the pangs this reflection occasioned, that more than once he was led to execrate the hour in which he had exposed himself to the temptation that seduced him from integrity.

Yet not this regret, agonizing as it was, could induce him to make an effort for retrieving the past. The idea of Emmeline was too powerful to permit of one of the kind; yet much he wished he could have attained the accomplishment of what he sought without being compelled to strike into the winding path of dissimulation, but in her arms

arms he fancied it would be impossible to feel remorse or regret.

Alas! in indulging such a fancy, on what an illusion did he depend for future tranquillity! Could the syren voice of Pleasure hush the upbraidings of Conscience, could the bowers of bliss exclude Repentance with her snaky crest, we should not behold so many of the favourites of Fortune as daily meet the moralizing eye, with clouds upon their brow, and hollow smiles upon their lip.

Man may fly from his fellow, but from himself, oh, where shall he take refuge? Not even in the arms of "Nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep," can he lose the consciousness of guilt.

Happy, enviable he, be his destiny ever so low, who dreads not to commune with himself; and miserable he, be his fate ever so exalted, who shrinks from the obtrusion of reflection.

Of the instability of human nature, the little

little reliance we can place on our own strength, the fallen Morcar was a proof; but a short time back, and no rank would have been able to screen from his fierce resentment the man who should have insinuated a belief of his being able to act as he had now done; but arrogantly believing he could command himself as he pleased, he rushed into temptation, and was subdued.

CHAP. VI.

"Heavens! what a goodly prospect spreads around,
Of hills, and dales, and woods, and lawns, and spires,
And glittering towns, and gilded streams, till all
The stretching landscape into smoke decays!"

WITHOUT fully explaining himself to the king, lest of any premature discovery, he requested his permission for a lengthened absence from court; which being granted, though reluctantly, he lost no time in setting out for Cornwall.

With feelings of the most tumultuous nature he again beheld the woods and lofty battlements of Trecothick rising to his view. But the rapture that pervaded them, on again beholding the habitation of her he loved, was quickly damped by the reception

tion she gave him, or rather the agitation and regret her looks manifested.

She could not indeed bring herself to be reconciled to the manner in which she had acted; she could not review her conduct without being compelled to accuse herself of levity and deception, an accusation replete with anguish to a mind naturally delicate and susceptible as hers; to the pangs it inflicted were united those of despairing love, for still the idea of Edmund remained imprest upon her mind; and she trembled to think what her future fate with lord Sebergham might be, should she be unable to subdue the prepossession she now experienced for another.

Shrinking from the idea of fulfilling her engagement to him, the agonies she fell into on the commencement of preparations for their nuptials, united to her repeated declarations that she never would have consented to become his, had she not imagined he would have allowed some time for the cultivation of her regard, ere he pressed for

the performance of her promise, had at length the effect of inducing her indulgent parents to postpone them.

Alarmed by their acquiescence to her wishes, by the strong repugnance she manifested to him, lord Sebergham could but ill disguise what he felt on the occasion. Convinced, however, that, for the present, expostulation on his part would be unavailing, he determined to have recourse to art for ensuring the ultimate accomplishment of his wishes.

To render public her engagement to him would be, he was convinced, to assure himself of the baron yet insisting on her fulfilment of it. Accordingly, for the purpose of doing this, he proposed an excursion to his seat in the North, as a means of whiling away the tedious interval of expectation.

This proposal was readily acceded to by the baron and lady Trecothick, partly from a wish to make amends for the disappointment he had experienced, and partly a hope that the journey might be of service

to

to their daughter, her faded cheek betraying a languor that greatly alarmed them.

The dejected Emmeline made no objection to it; the complaisance shewn to her wishes making her conceive some in return, on her part, due to those of others.

Accordingly, preparations were immediately made for the journey; and with a splendid retinue the party set out from the Castle.

The fineness of the season, when all is luxuriant and beautiful, was calculated to render any thing of the kind delightful; and but for the embittering reflections that accompanied her, Emmeline would have been enchanted. As it was, there were moments in which she was insensibly amused, and beguiled of her uneasiness. All was new to her on her approach to the northern counties; and the deep attention which curiosity caused had often the effect of abstracting her mind from painful reflections.

The stupendous scenery which here met her view, in the rude fells of those nor-

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thern regions, and the traces of antiquity every where discernible, alternately exalted her imagination, and afforded entertainment to her thoughts.

The slowness with which they were compelled to journey, from the difficulties and dangers that then opposed the progress of the traveller, afforded the eye ample time for expatiating over all that came under its observation.

Still more particular views were at times obtained, from the detention of the party at the different castles which they visited in their way, and where, with the hospitality of the times, they were forced to remain, till recruited for the renewal of the journey.

At Ambleside, at Kendal, and at Kirby Lonsdale, they paused. If sensations of awe were excited in the mind of Emmeline by the view of the stupendous waterfall of the first, scarcely less was her imagination raised by the magnificent prospect of the distant mountains that here met the eye—

a prospect

a prospect sweetly contrasted by the tranquil appearance of the deep valley beneath, through which the Lone holds its beautiful course.

From hence they proceeded to Pendragon Castle, where they were most hospitably entertained by the lord Clifford and his lady, its noble owners; and for the few days they remained at it, were amused by examining the ancient intrenchments lying contiguous, in the dell in which it was situated, and inquiring into the truth of the tradition respecting the prince from whom it took its name, and according to which he is supposed to have died by poison put into a well, early in the sixth century.

They next paused at Brough. The varied scenery that was here contemplated occasioned emotions of the liveliest admiration. On one side a range of craggy mountains, over whose rugged surface trees and shrubs were scattered, prevented the eye from ranging; while on the other, a smiling

 plain

plain extending, gave it free scope to wander, till again arrested by the majestic promontory of Wildbore Fell, elevating its peaked brow to the clouds, that tinged it with a cerulean hue.

The rich groves of sycamore through which they passed on leaving this—the verdure of the meadows—the contrast between fields of yellow corn and the swelling pastures, brown with the summer heat, and tufted with brushwood—the running brooks sparkling in the dancing beams, with blue tints of smoke, from scattered hamlets here and there, slowly arising above the coppices, gave an enchanting variety to the scene.

A little further on, they could not help stopping to admire the grandeur of the prospect that presented itself to their view. Stretching westward from the extensive plain over which they were travelling, lay a chain of mighty mountains, fading on the sight in the distant perspective, and seemingly mixing in azure hue with the

sky.

sky. Nearer, the hills, half girt with brushwood, descended in swift slopes to the vale in pasturage, the rich verdure of which was beautifully contrasted by their brows of naked rock and barren cliffs; while Cross Fell, with its savage front, was seen loftily overtopping all; and here and there, in picturesque variety, deep shadowy dells opened amidst the stupendous heights.

The delight inspired by the beauties of Appleby, to which they next approached, was heightened by the suddenness with which they burst upon the view; an air of cheerfulness prevailed over all here, that failed not of communicating a corresponding feeling. The Eden, sparkling in the sun's rays, through the thronging branches of the trees that ornament the little vale through which it flows, and which meadows, rude cliffs, and hanging rocks, still farther and more romantically diversified, could not be viewed without a sensation of the kind.

The eye knew not on which to rest, this

fairy scene, or the castle, with its noble aspect, and spreading woods, with here and there a red cliff breaking through the foliage—the public road winding high above it, enlivened by scattered cottages—beneath, the river sweetly murmuring—and to the left, lofty cliffs and precipices rising perpendicularly from the water, solemnly shadowed by oaks and ashes hanging from their brow.

The way they pursued, for a considerable distance from this, afforded them new pleasure, so varied were the beauties of the banks of the Eden, along which their road extended, now richly wooded, now spreading into level meads.

They could not pass Kirby Thore without stopping to examine the remains of ancient grandeur then extant there, but which gave them but an imperfect idea of the temple in which the greatest of the divinities of the Pagan Saxons was worshipped, where, in a spacious hall, majestically resting on a covered bed, a kingly sceptre

sceptre in his hand, and on his head a crown of gold, set round with burnished stars, he seemed to them the god of thunder.

Brougham Castle, seated on the banks of the river Emont, afforded them another delightful halt. The vast extent of the building, the noble turrets that formed the angles, the groups of cattle dispersed over the grassy plane of pasture-ground, along which the outworks extended to a considerable distance, the river, margined with shrubs, and the mountains that skirted the horizon, seen through the ash-trees that tufted the ground, presented a landscape at once interesting and beautiful to the view.

Penrith was the next place that received them, from whence the peaks of Dufton, together with a prospect of Cross Fell, and a chain of mountains sinking in the extreme distance in the plain on which the city of Carlisle stands, and of a ridge of Scotch mountains forming the utmost boundary of the view, were beheld.

They neglected not to visit the curious

grottoes on the banks of the Emont here, dug out of the solid rock, and sufficiently capacious to contain an hundred men, and which, in former times, according to the traditions of the vulgar, were inhabited by a giant named Isis, who unmercifully devoured every thing living that came in his way.

Neither did they omit viewing the two pyramidical stones in the churchyard, some yards asunder, and with several segments of circular stones between them, representing, according to the fancy of the country-people, wild boars, and forming a monument of the valour of a renowned knight-errant, named Sir Evan Cæserius, buried in the spot, and who, in his day, made terrible havock of these animals in Inglewood Forest.

At length, after visiting several other places of note, they reached their destination at Keswick. Seated on a bold precipitous eminence on the banks of the lake, the ancient fortress, that knew lord Sebergham

bergham for its master, commanded an uninterrupted view of the adjoining scênery, where beauty and sublimity are so wonderfully blended—where the imagination is at once astonished and delighted, the mind awed, yet elevated, by the horrible magnificence, yet romantic grandeur, that alternately meet the view.

Immediately before it the lake spread its chequered bosom, hemmed in with its rude chaotic assemblage of perpendicular mountains and steep wood-covered hills, here rising immediately out of the lake, there falling back in ruinous and rude confusion, as if heaped on one another from some terrible convulsion of nature; here again shelving and bending over it, as if menacing to bury their cloud-capped heads within its waves, forming a circus of the most astonishing and stupendous description.

The purple haze of evening was spreading over the scene, imparting a cold and dreary aspect to it, as the travellers arrived,

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that chilled their feelings, and rendered the cheerful blaze of the oak that burned in the hall not a little pleasing to them.

The baron, in particular, enjoyed the domestic comforts of the blazing hearth; seated in an antique chair beside it, he gave way to the exhilaration it inspired, in a manner that communicated something of a similar feeling to all around him.

But had a gloomy impression remained, the beauty of the succeeding day was well calculated to disperse it. The sun, rising with all his summer warmth and refulgence, gave to these mountainous regions a richness of colouring that softened their savageness.

Day had scarcely opened ere the neighbouring nobles, apprized of the arrival of lord Seberghan and his illustrious guests, hastened to pay the compliments due on such occasions; and a scene of continued revelry now commenced at Grey Cliff Tower, well adapted to please the lovers of pleasure, and afford lord Seberghan an opportunity

opportunity of displaying his courtly taste and princely magnificence. But she in honour of whom all was contrived continued pensive and unsocial; not but what her pride was highly gratified by the universal homage she received; but the idea of the levity she had acted with, united to a still too tender recollection of him the instigations of ambition had induced her voluntarily to resign, continued to disturb and embitter her tranquillity.

If at any moment her heart acknowledged a feeling of returning peace, it was in wandering through the romantic scenes around the Tower; so soothing is the view of Nature, so solemnly impressive its sublimity.

The traditions connected with many of these heightened the interest they were calculated to inspire; in particular, that of St. Herbert, the remains of whose romantic hermitage, in a beautiful island of the lake, she was early taken to see by the enamoured Sebergham.

Hither, said the legend, he retired to

, avoid

avoid the intercourse of man, and for the purposes of penitence and prayer. Nothing could be better adapted than the retreat he chose, surrounded as he was by the lake, with rocks and mountains, the drear abodes of everlasting solitude and barrenness, his daily prospect, and the voice of waterfalls on every side inspiring melancholy, and exciting to meditation, except when overpowered by the raging of the wintry blast, bellowing through the rents and caverns of the mountains, like a spirit of darkness struggling to free itself from torment.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

"A tale of the times of old. The deeds of days of other years."

"Dost thou not behold, Malvina, a rock with its head of heath? The thistle is there alone, and sheds its aged beard. Two stones, half sunk in the ground, shew their heads of moss. The deer of the mountain avoids the place, for he beholds the grey ghost that guards it; for the mighty lie, oh Malvina! in the narrow plain of the rock."

St. Herbert was of Saxon origin; he was of the chiefs who had possessed themselves of the northern part of the island, and by the foundation of the seventh kingdom, formed the Heptarchy. In the school of valour was he trained; early was he taught to bend the bow, to wield the spear, to lead

lead the flying chace; his sword was a meteor of death, and on the flying foe he still hung forward. In the dreadful warfare that long prevailed between the northern Saxons and the Cumbri, he bore a distinguished part. At length the desolation of the wasted fields induced each party to wish for a truce; and through the concessions of Cadwall, king of the Cumbri, to the haughty foe, it was at last agreed upon; he saw that without incurring destruction, he could not persevere in hostilities; the rising tombs of the valiant reminded him how much an interval of peace was required, and accordingly he submitted to terms for obtaining it he would not otherwise have done. A son and daughter constituted the family and chief pride of Cadwall. The mild loveliness of Morna reminded one of the softness of opening day—the manly beauties of Cerdic of its refulgent noon. Many were the competitors for the love of the maid, but early had her choice fallen on Cathol, king of Morven.

ven. While yet a mere youth, her brother, in a voyage to explore the shores of his native island, was driven by a storm on the western coast of Scotland, where Fergus, father of Cathol, then reigned, and who, with the hospitality of the times, immediately invited the royal youth to his mansion, thus affording an opportunity for the commencement of a friendship between him and his son Cathol—a friendship which, from the congeniality of their dispositions, the similarity of their ages, the mutual admiration with which they beheld each other, and many other circumstances, promised to be durable as life.

On returning to Cumberland, Cerdic was accompanied by his new friend; and from that period a league of the strictest amity was formed between the respective kings, their fathers—a league that the prospect of an alliance between them, which, from the quickly-conceived passion of Cathol and Morna for each other was soon beheld, promised to confirm.

But alas! the generous Cathol was destined to find his hopes deceitful; his father suddenly died, and ere the song of mourning raised by the bards over his tomb had ceased, Cathol beheld himself threatened with the loss of his dominions.

From the noble Trenmor, the first who bore the semblance of regal authority in Caledonia, he was immediately descended; but his right to the sovereignty, that from this circumstance devolved on him, was disputed by another branch of the deceased and daring chieftain's family. This contested right had often previously led to many terrible combats, but which still ending to the disadvantage of the aggressors, a hope was entertained of their being no more renewed; but it was a hope destined to disappointment, for it was only till they had strengthened themselves sufficiently for the renewal of hostilities that the inveterate foes of Cathol remained quiet.

Obtaining, through undue means, the aid of the kings of Lochlin and Inistore, as well as of many of the distinguished chiefs,

chiefs of their native land, partly from selfish motives, partly a wish for the utter extirpation of a family which had imposed a yoke upon them their proud and turbulent spirits could ill permit them to brook, they attacked Cathol, while yet absorbed in grief for the loss of his affectionate sire. But though unprepared for the bursting of the storm, he did not shrink from it, till convinced, from the loss of his house's ancient alliances, he must, for the present, wage unequal war—a conviction no sooner admitted, than conceiving it a greater proof of magnanimity to submit to dire necessity than rashly oppose it, he determined on quietly withdrawing from his dominions, and seeking, in person, for assistance to recover them; but ere he could prevail on himself to carry this latter part of his determination into effect, love impelled him to pay another visit to the residence of Cadwall. Deeply affecting was the meeting between him and his loved friend, and deeply did that friend regret

his

his inability to afford him the aid he so much required; but, alas! his native fields yet lying waste from the cruel ravages of war, and the chief of the warriors of Cumbri slain, all he could do was to utter fervent wishes for his obtaining it elsewhere, and while he sought it in one quarter, to promise to endeavour to obtain it for him in another.

The fears that had involuntarily gained admission to the harassed bosom of Cathol, of the cruel reverse in his fate occasioning some alteration in the sentiments of Morna, were dissipated by the tearful assurances of the maid herself, and the ardent ones of Cerdic—"Dear as she is to my heart," cried the generous youth, "as he witnessed their solemn betrothment to each other, "yet did she think of falsifying her vows, in the hour of adversity, to him to whom, in the season of prosperity, she had plighted them, I would tear her from it, as unworthy of the race to which she belongs; with watchful jealousy will I guard her

for

for thee, and powerful must he be indeed who shall rob thee of her."

Consoled by the confidence he was allowed to repose in love and friendship, the youth set sail for the coast of Ullin, on the king of which both consanguinity and gratitude gave him many claims for succour; for often, to aid him and his predecessors in their battles, had the warriors of his house crossed the blue waves that divided the kingdoms, and raised the hostile spear.

Skilled in every martial exercise was the noble fugitive; whether he bent the bow, wielded the headlong spear, or scaled the beetling precipice, to battle with the eagle in his dangerous airy, he bore away from each competitor the meed of valour.

But not alone in these did he excel—with minstrel skill he touched the harp, and raised the song of grief; but amongst the daughters of Beauty that had melted at the sound, none had ever fixed his wandering glances, but the mildly-blushing Morna, the affianced bride of his wishes.

But,

But, alas! when fickle fortune proves an enemy, how many follow her example! Though in secret Cadwall did justice to his worth, yet no sooner did he find him a fugitive from his kingdom, than he began to repent the engagement he had sanctioned between him and his daughter, and wish for a pretext for breaking it off. From the first blushing dawn of her beauty, he had indulged a hope of its being the means of procuring him some powerful alliance—an alliance for which recent circumstances had now rendered him more anxious than ever. But how, in honour, could he break it?—how make the misfortunes of the youth an excuse for doing so? With shame he shrunk from the thought, and a conviction that even though he should be able to prevail on himself to do so, he never could succeed in obtaining the concurrence of the high-minded Cerdic to the measure.

In this fluctuating state, chance threw him in the way of Herbert, as, availing himself

himself of the truce to stray wherever inclination led, he pursued the chace one day amidst the deep ravines of the mountains that lay contiguous to the habitation of Cadwall.

Pleased with the appearance of the gallant youth, and solicitous besides, from motives of policy, to recommend himself to his regard, he hesitated not to ask him to partake of the cheer of his hall—an invitation which was as frankly received as freely given.

Here the ardent eyes of Herbert scarcely encountered the blue rolling ones of Morna, ere on her they became fixed alone. The sadness that at times, like a fleecy vapour over the face of the moon, hung upon her brow, her kindling blushes, as from time to time she met his ardent glances, the tremor of her soft hand when touched by his in the mingling dance, the sighs of her heaving breast as the strain of love swelled from the harp, all gave an attraction to her beauty that rendered it resistless.

But

But not unnoticed were the feelings it inspired by the watchful Cerdic, jealous of the maid on account of his friend.

Seizing an opportunity of speaking apart to the proud Saxon, he abruptly introduced the subject of her engagement—"Let not therefore the consideration of her being the daughter of your host induce you, noble Herbert, to distinguish her by your attentions." He added, "let them be the tribute of your admiration to some other who is at liberty to requite them with her smiles, such as neither her own feelings, nor the knowledge of my jealous vigilance, will permit Morna to grant."

How indignant were the sensations this declaration excited in the breast of the haughty Herbert! Believing the smallest indication of his admiration must be flattering, he felt at once humbled and irritated by it.

His frown of dark disdain was not unmarked by Cadwall, who no more than his son

son had ceased for a moment observing him, though with very different feelings.

The advantages that must accrue from an alliance with him were too manifest not to make him experience a strong sensation of pleasure at the manner in which he noticed Morna, and an equal one of anger at the repulse, it was evident to him, from the gestures of each, his growing passion for her had received from Cerdic.

But to express this displeasure he knew would be unavailing. Incapable of being warped from integrity or plighted faith by any motive of policy or interest, to expostulate with the latter on the subject would, he was well aware, be of little service.

Calmly, however, to yield to his wishes, by giving way to what he now deemed his romantic friendship for Cathol, was more than he could prevail on himself to do.

But his determination to act contrary to them he deemed it but prudent to conceal for the present, lest of exciting an oppo-

sition that might prove inimical to his plans. Accordingly, letting nothing escape him that could excite a suspicion of his meaning any thing injurious to Cathol, he saw him depart, for the purpose of fulfilling the promise he had pledged him, ere he made an effort for the accomplishment of these plans.

Then properly instructing a crafty Briton, named Reutha, high in his confidence, he dispatched him to invite Herbert again to his mansion, with an intimation that neither he nor his daughter had any other motive for adhering to the engagement formed with the king of Morven, but their dread of provoking the ire of his friend by breaking it.

There was too much of integrity in the noble countenance of Cerdic, in his frank and unstudied manners, to permit the crafty Herbert giving credit to this assertion, so contrary to the one he had heard from him; but madly enamoured of the beauteous Morna, he determined to act as if he believed

believed it. Such, however, was the native rectitude of his soul, often was he tempted to forego this determination. But so still more interestingly lovely did each succeeding moment render the maid in his eyes—the tender supplications she had recourse to, for the purpose of inducing him to relinquish his suit—the tears she shed for her absent Cathol—the wishes she continually breathed for his success, as finally to decide him on prosecuting it.

To win a heart so tender, must, he conceived, be happiness in the extreme; and once his, he doubted not of being able to obtain it, from the opportunities such a circumstance would afford of paying her those tender attentions best calculated to do so.

But in vain did he persevere in his resolution—in vain, profiting by the absence of her beloved Cerdic, did her father exert his authority to induce her to listen favourably to him; nothing could bend

her to their wishes, till falsehood was resorted to for the purpose.

By means of bribed agents of her father, she was led to believe that Cathol had proved false to his plighted vows—that, for the purpose of obtaining the aid of the king of Ullin, he had accepted the offered hand of his daughter, Roscrana.

Incapable of believing a parent so revered could thus cruelly impose upon a child, she gave implicit faith to the fiction, and in the frenzy it excited, became the bride of Herbert.

Scarcely had she resigned the privilege of weeping over the supposed perfidy of her lover, ere she was summoned by a confidant to a secret interview with a person in disguise.

Trembling with presageful fears, she obeyed, and on the dropping of the cloak in which the majestic form of the stranger was enveloped, found herself in the arms of her beloved Cerdic. But the shriek of wild

wild surprise that was bursting from her lips, was prevented by his conjuring her not to let it be discovered that he was there, his unexpected return being on a business it was necessary to conceal—no other than to put her on her guard against various plots and plans contriving for the purpose of rendering her unfaithful to her vows to Cathol, and which, through the vigilance of a trusty agent left behind, had been discovered to him.

Morna, the freezing Morna, listened with the forced calmness of despair to all he had to tell; then wildly wringing her hands, with a frantic exclamation that his caution came too late, fell lifeless on his breast.

Long was it ere she recovered to an existence she now hated, and still longer ere the alarmed Cerdic could obtain from her a collected account of what had passed; but when at length he found she was the victim of deception—that the cruel artifices contrived against her happiness and

his beloved friend's had but too fatally succeeded, no language could describe his fury. Unsheathing his sword, he would instantly have rushed upon the bridal party, under the idea that Herbert was concerned in these deceptions, but for the interposition of Morna. Clinging to his feet, she besought him, in all the agonies of apprehension, to abstain from such a measure, if he wished to avoid a scene of bloodshed; but her fear of this being occasioned, should he act as the fury of his soul impelled him, was not her only motive for striving to prevent him; she dreaded his yielding to it might prevent the escape she meditated, and therefore, as much from this dread as any other, strove to oppose his doing so; for rather than be dragged to the arms of Herbert, death, in its most frightful form, was preferable to her.

Instead of avenging her sorrows, she implored him, if indeed he commiserated them, to aid her in avoiding further persecution, by conducting her to some retreat

where

where she might remain undiscovered, avowing the determination she had formed of seeking death, rather than be given up to Herbert, if he refused her.

The bitter disappointment which such a measure must be a means of inflicting on him, instantly induced the wrathful Cerdic to favour her escape.

Hastening from the paternal roof, they proceeded, with all the precipitation of fear, towards a distant retreat; a plaintive sound was emitted by an untouched harp as Morna quitted the threshold, and a low murmur heard in the trees. But neither real nor imaginary terrors could check them from proceeding, the dangers and difficulties of their way gloaming as was night around them. All indeed wore an aspect bleak and dismal as the altered prospects of the heart-struck Morna; yet at intervals, as if in pity, the moon shewed her pale face. At length they reached the destined spot; a rude cave, midway up a stupendous mountain, ascending, as it were, into the very

 clouds,

clouds, and covered to the very uttermost summit, with woods rustling above woods. Through these a foaming torrent came tumbling into a deep chasm, formed by a rent in the mountain, where the blackness of the shelving rocks, overgrown with fern and wild plants, formed a striking contrast to the lucid brightness of the water, "when through the broad-headed groves of the hill," the moon shone upon the spot. Awful was the sound of the torrent to the ear of the trembling fugitive, and chilling the blast that rushing down through the woods, seemed as if repelling her approach.

Within the cave dwelt an aged bard; there bent he in the thoughts of other years, and often, it was said, voices more than human met his listening ear.

To his care the unhappy Morna was committed for the present; presageful of evil, she would have prevented the immediate departure of Cerdic, but her efforts for the purpose were unavailing; yet strove

he

he to calm her apprehensions, by promises of a speedy return.

The aged Carul attended his descending steps some way down the woody path, in order to be better instructed as to the cause of the weeping Morna's grief.

As, straining her sight, she watched the majestic form of Cerdic gradually receding from her view, a low rustling sound in the cave occasioned her to turn hastily, and in the light of the lamp that was suspended from the rocky roof, something bright flashed upon her eyes.

Surprised, alarmed, her knees trembling, her heart wildly throbbing, she advanced a few steps, and beheld, in the arch of an inner cave, the tall figure of a half-armed warrior leaning on his sword, and earnestly regarding her. She paused in suspensive terror, uncertain whether it was indeed a living form she saw, or the ghost of some departed chief yet lingering for the sound of his praise. It seemed to advance—a shriek, wild and piercing, burst from her

 lips,

lips, yet not a shriek of terror, for suddenly the features of Cathol were disclosed to her view.

Fainting through the surprise of the moment, he caught her in his arms. His ardent caresses, his passionate whispers, quickly recalled her to life. She looked up—she met his dark eyes beaming with rapture on her—she saw smiles of mingled joy and tenderness playing over his countenance. It was evident then he knew nothing of what had happened, and was the wretchedness of her fate to be aggravated by being the person compelled to disclose it to him! Groaning in agony, she made a feeble but ineffectual attempt to burst from him.

Still, still he strained her to his throbbing heart—still, still he gazed with heightening rapture on her varying cheek—"How is it that I behold thee here?" he cried, "did some secret presage, some dream of the night, impel thee hither?"

"Alas!" in agony burst from the quivering

vering lips of Morna; then suddenly checking herself, "first say," she returned, "to what thy being here is owing. Great would be the alarm excited by the circumstance, but for thy happy looks."

"Briefly then," replied the noble Cathol; "succeeding in my application to the king of Ullin, I could not refrain from witnessing the joy which I well knew the intelligence of my success would impart to you and my friend; accordingly, some little time being necessary to collect the warriors of Erin, I took advantage of the circumstance to hasten hither for the purpose; but wishing to conceal the visit, lest it should draw upon me the imputation of committing to others the care of my interest, I took refuge here till night, on landing this morning on the coast; and being overpowered with fatigue, fell into a profound sleep a few hours ago, from which I was awaked, by fancying I heard your soft voice calling upon me for help."

Morna wrung her hands—"Oh, in vain, in vain should I not have called for it," she cried, "had I sooner seen thee!" He could no longer detain her; bursting from his grasp, she staggered to a further part of the cave, and leaning against a projection of the rocky wall, covered her face with her hands.

The alarmed Cathol followed; he implored her to explain the cause of the agonizing emotions he witnessed; but Morna could not bring herself to attend to his supplication—could not bring herself to say there was now guilt in receiving the tender caresses he bestowed—in listening to the impassioned assurances he uttered.

In the midst of his entreaties, the venerable Carul entered; in a moment he divined the cause of the scene he witnessed—"Unhappy pair," he said, as softly he approached them, "could the compassion of Carul alleviate thy sufferings, how soon would they be assuaged!"

Cathol,

Cathol, starting from the feet of Morna, almost fiercely demanded an explanation of these words?

Gently laying his hand upon his arm, Carul would have led him to a distance from Morna; but resisting the effort—"No," said he, "here, before her who must alone occasion my bliss or woe, will I hear what I have to suffer."

As explained to him by Cerdic, Carul proceeded to inform him.

Ah, how did every dream of happiness, every hope of bliss, become dissolved as he listened to the cruel recital! Alternately did his eyes flame with resentment—alternately become dimmed with tears, as they fell upon the lost Morna.

"But she shall be avenged!" he at length exclaimed, with bursting rage; "the despoiler of my hopes shall not glory in his triumph!" He would have fled, but was prevented by Morna franticly arresting his course. She implored, she besought him to give up the revenge he meditated—to

reserve

reserve the exertions which could not now serve her for the retrieval of his own fortunes; so entangled was she in misery, she represented to him, that human means could not extricate her from it. For a moment her soft, her suppliant voice, had power to calm his fury; again he strained her to his breast—again their sighs blended, their tears mingled; then again wrought up to still greater desperation, by the tenderness thus excited, he suddenly burst from her, and was again rushing from the cave, when the kneeling form of Morna, on the threshold, with out-stretched arms, once more prevented him.

He called upon Carul to force her thence; but Carul, far from obeying, united with her in trying to hinder his departure. While yet they opposed it, hasty steps were heard approaching; and in a minute after, all pale with affright, a youth belonging to Cadwall rushed in, with tidings of a terrible affray in the palace, owing to Cerdic's having returned to denounce vengeance

geance for the wrongs done to his sister and his friend, and Herbert's in vain demanding his bride. From the number and fierceness of his followers, he much feared for the life of Cerdic, he said, and had therefore fled the palace, for the purpose of spreading an alarm.

Cathol heard no more; swift as an arrow from a bow, he fled to the succour of his friend; human opposition could no longer have stayed him, had the danger of her loved Cerdic, and the receding senses of Morna, allowed her to offer any further to his departure.

Wild with terror, often in the course of this terrible night would she have rushed out, but for her dread of falling into the power of Herbert.

As he promised, Renon, from time to time, brought her tidings of what was going forward.

Dreadful were these tidings; the truce between the Cumbri and the Saxons was broken; the insult offered to the son of

their

their king, by the detention of his bride, affording the latter the fair pretext they had been wishing for the purpose.

Oh how, as hapless Morna listened to these tidings, and heard of the wide-spreading desolation she was the means of occasioning, how did she wish that, like the fair floweret of some lonely vale, she had passed away unseen!

At length, to avoid the dreadful alternative to which she was reduced, of either resigning herself to the arms of Herbert, or else allowing her native fields to be again laid waste, she resolved on seeking death.

The means of effecting this resolve were not difficult; the cave that afforded her shelter in former times had been a retreat for the hunters, and still many ancient pieces of armour hung within it. Equipping herself in the arms of a young warrior, she hastened to the field of warfare. The death she sought she was not long in finding. On a sudden she beheld Cathol and

and Herbert, the former wounded, encountering each other. Staggering from loss of blood, Cathol fell; and taking advantage of the circumstance, Herbert's arm was uplifted against him, when, with a wild shriek of terror, Morna rushed forward, and in her breast of snow received the blow designed for his. The spear dropt from her hand; and softly pronouncing his name, she sunk beside him.

But how describe the feelings of each, of the lover and the husband, alike recognised as was her voice by both at the moment!

The heavy eyes of Cathol unclosed; but the succour he would have afforded, the arresting hand of death prevented; already had its damps stole over him—already its mists dimmed his sight; he was destined to sleep on other shores than his native ones—to leave to others to dispute the inheritance of Morven.

But prompt was the succour of Herbert; tearing

tearing the bloody mail from her breast, he called aloud for assistance; but vainly was it tendered; faintly struggling with those who would have raised her, Morná, again sighing forth his name, sunk lifeless upon the bosom of her Cathol.

Oh what would not Herbert have relinquished to preserve her life—the life too of his noble rival! Oh what, what would he not have sacrificed at this moment to have been able to think he was not the occasion of their death!

Too late repentant of his conduct towards the hapless lovers, in agonizing remorse he hung over them, now trying to persuade himself Morna still breathed, now franticly imploring the forgiveness of the injured Cathol.

The wild exclamations of his despair for a few minutes suspended the raging of the battle; but it was only till Cerdic was apprized of what had happened. On suddenly missing Cathol, "his eyes looked wildly

wildly round in search of his friend;" too soon did he ascertain his fate, and with it that of his sister, his loved Morna.

But the grief it occasioned found no vent in sighs or groans; the tempest it kindled in his soul could only be allayed by the destruction of the foe. Again, like a meteor of death, did he flame through the field—again did death dimly stride behind his shield, but in dealing it around he met his own. In the pride of his strength, the refulgent noon of his days, fell the last hope of Cadwall. Hastening to his succour, on seeing him hemmed in by a party of the foe, he arrived but in time to see him fall beneath their spears. At the instant approached the lifeless bodies of Cathol and his Morna, borne on the shields of the warriors. His soul, that never was subdued before, fainted within him at the sight; in the death of his children he saw the extinction of his hopes—in the extinction of these hopes, a merited punishment for his breach of faith; despairingly he

dropt

dropt his arms, the spear that had been lifted up in vain in defence of his son, the round shield of his forefathers, and was conveyed from the mournful field never to review it.

Bursting with the frenzy of desperation alike from friend and foe, Herbert, at a distance, followed the mournful procession. Pale and cold as the moonbeams that fall upon the summits of her native mountains, he saw the lovely Morna and her lover laid beneath the shadow of a rock—he saw the stones of the valley heaped up on high, to mark to future ages, with their heads of moss, the bed of their repose. The aged bards of her house collecting round it, raised there the song of grief; nor was hers the name alone heard in the song; to Cathol too it was also raised, that, like hers, his spirit might depart with joy on the wings of the wind.

But whose were the lamentations that succeeded to theirs?—who the mourner that, concealed amidst the foliage of the cold

cold dripping rock, impatiently watched for their departure, to vent, over the spot, the bursting anguish of his bosom? Alas! the wretched Herbert. All night he wept amidst the broken clods—all night lay he extended on the damp earth. There bemoaned he the hour in which they had met—there renounced he, for the dear sake of his lost Morna, all future joys and fame —"Oh hapless!" he cried; "but for me, still might thy blue eyes have rolled in gladness—still might life and happiness have been thine; and thou, generous Cathol, thou who, like a young pine of the forest beneath the vengeful lightning, hast fallen, through my means, in all thy glowing pride of youth and manly beauty—thou can I ever cease to deplore? But, luckless pair, well shalt thou be avenged. On thy account, never more shall Herbert be seen in the fields of the valiant, or the halls of his fathers; with remorse shall he for ever think of thee—in solitude mourn thee."

With the rising beam of the east he lingeringly departed: in every direction was he sought, but in vain; and at length it was concluded he had fallen in the battle.

But short was the period allowed for the indulgence of grief at either, side. Inflamed with deeper ire, with deadlier revenge, from what had passed, the war was renewed with redoubled fury.

With scarcely any intermission, it continued to rage till the desolation of the wasted fields compelled a truce. Years rolled away without beholding its ravages repaired. The halls of the valiant were deserted; and in the caves of the wild rocks and mountains, the chief and the vassal alike sought refuge.

But though lost to the world, Herbert was still within hearing of these disastrous tidings. In seeking a distant solitude, he had strayed to Landisfarne, or Holy Island, as even then it was called, from being a retiring place for such of the religious as wished to wean themselves entirely from the

the world. Of these St. Cuthbert was chief; and presently becoming acquainted with him, the before but half-enlightened Herbert soon became such a convert, through his means, as to be induced formally to renounce that world which in his heart he had already done.

Buried beneath a cowl was now that countenance that still glowed with the fire of youth and the enthusiasm of genius, and passed in melancholy vigils those nights that had heretofore been devoted to spreading the wild flame of the beacon of war, or in awaking the trembling chords of the flower-crowned harp at the command of beauty.

Uninterrupted in his reflections on the past, his remorse daily increased, till at length he was induced by it to decide on renouncing all further intercourse with man.

The pious Cuthbert approved of the resolve; and by confirming him in it, by his approval, evinced his practising the self-denial he preached; for so greatly was Herbert

bert endeared to him by his sorrows, his meekness, and humility, that not without regret could he think of their separating. His parting benediction was bestowed with tears; and yielding to the subduing feelings of the moment, he prayed that an equitemporary death might be theirs—a prayer which, according to the legend, was granted.

Like the genius of the place mourning its desolation, or rather like the genius of desolation itself coming to brood over the horrors it had occasioned, did Herbert appear amidst the wilds of Cumbri. Previous to his arrival had he already, in imagination, marked the spot in which he meant to sequester himself; here a rude hermitage was shortly erected, in which he fixed his eternal abode. The horrors to which such a situation exposed him he deemed but a merited punishment for the misery he had been instrumental to causing. Wherever his eye wandered, or he suffered his foot to stray, he beheld overwhelming proofs of

of this; all was silent and dreary, deserted and forlorn. In vain he sought his companions in arms—those youthful heroes, who, but a few years back, had appeared destined to grow old amongst their children's children; alas! their grassy tombs now alone met his mournful view! He listened for the sound of the enlivening horn, but the hunter slept within the narrow house, unmindful of the rising beam that was wont to call him to the chace. He visited the grave of Morna and her Cathol, but no bard now raised the song of mourning there—no maid wept their hapless loves—the breeze of the valley alone sighed over it. He entered the halls of her fathers—there where, in the light of beauty, he had first beheld her. Ah, where were the warriors?—where the gallant chiefs he had then met?—where the grey-haired Cadwall?—where the noble Cerdic?—where the harp's enlivening sound?—where the feast and the blazing oak? Gone—vanished—

nished—never to return—never to be renewed. Scattered arms still remained, but departed were those that had used them. The halls still opened to admit the stranger, but silence and desolation alone met him there.

He roved through the groves of the mountains, but the winds of spring played among them without alluring any to enjoy their sweetness; he scaled the cliffs, but the daring eagle alone encountered him there.

The terrible sensations excited by this general desolation would probably have tempted him to forsake the place, but for his vow of solitude, and the punishment he conceived he merited. But austere only to himself, when at length his retreat was known to the scattered natives, he became the refuge of the sorrowing, and the admonisher of the erring; the guilty he reproved, and with the miserable he wept. The fame of his sanctity spread beyond the limits of the mountains that towered round him;

him; and in the course of a few revolving years after his death, occasioned the title of saint to be added to his name.

A stone, with its head of moss, marks, to the inquiring, the spot where, near the grave of his loved Morna, he rests. In mournful converse there, half viewless, it is said they often walk, whilst, on the sides of the mountains, ærial troops renew the fierce combats of former days, till a blast comes and scatters the empty forms.

But not to entire desolation was consigned the halls of generous Cerdic; some few years after his race had failed, the chance of war gave them to the possession of a noble Saxon, "and from him," said Morcar, concluding the legend, "am I descended.

"The valiant live in the songs of the bards, and the memory of admiring posterity; though no son remained to perpetuate the name of Cerdic, yet not without his fame has been the generous chief. Here, where he flourished and fell, where, marked with the strokes of battle, his half-worn

shield still hangs, amidst the scattered arms of his fathers, have his praises been sung, and emulation inspired in the breast of the youthful by the recital of his deeds."

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Something like
That voice, methinks, I should have somewhere heard;
But floods of woes have hurried it far off,
Beyond my ken of soul. DRYDEN.

THE tears of which Morcar beguiled Emmeline as he proceeded, gave her new charms in his eyes.—" Alas!" she musingly sighed as he concluded, " how dire are the consequences of artifice and inordinate ambition!"

The reflection striking to the very heart of Morcar, the sigh was involuntarily echoed by him.

The trophied halls which she had often before listlessly roved through, were now viewed with a feeling of interest, from the

images connected with them in her mind. She would pilgrimize to the spot where the hapless lovers lay interred. Wild, savage, solitary, here was nothing that did not tend to confirm the impression made by their story. A narrow stony vale, scantily covered with grass, and hemmed in by perpendicular, and in many places projecting, mountains, excluding all view beyond them, formed the scene: but if the eye was prevented wandering, how was the imagination led to range, by the clouds that sublimely floated over their summits! involuntarily did the mind picture them steering to unknown regions, or rolling forward, to awfully congregate in some distant chamber of the sky.

The tender melancholy with which Emmeline returned imprest, led her to solitude. Stealing through one of the lower halls of the tower, loftily hollowed in the rock, and lit by loopholes in it, she seated herself in a retired spot contiguous to it, over which oaks, embossed with the moss

of

of years, hung perpendicularly, while immediately above her the thick birch waved its green head, and directly before her the lake, like a plain of burnished silver, beautifully reflected the cerulean sky, finely contrasted by the deep shadows of the mountains.

Here, where all was wild, lonely, and romantic, she awaked the vibrating chords of the harp, in praise of the departed; sweet and sad was the requiem, well calculated to dissolve the very soul in tenderness.

Its effect upon the ardent feelings of the enamoured Sebergham may easier be conceived than described. Ever watchful of her motions, he had observed her retiring, and prompted by curiosity, followed her in secret; but though impelled by emotion, by the rapturous admiration she inspired, to discover himself, he was yet restrained by a dread of offending. Notwithstanding all his caution, however, a

bursting sigh, in the fulness of his heart, betrayed him.

Emmeline would have chidden, but for the sudden reflection of the right he might conceive he had to follow her steps. Her very heart sunk at the idea of this right; but alas! voluntarily granting it, as she had done, to retract it was impossible. The regret it excited was heightened by the consideration of the motive that had induced her to allow it, for the more she reflected on the conduct of the confiding Lestwithiel, the more severely she deemed it merited condemnation.

Pertinaciously adhering to his idea, lord Sebergham, in consequence, had failed of creating, in any degree, an interest for himself in her heart, that interest which it was not more his study to obtain, than now her wish to allow him; but the feelings cannot be forced; all we can do is to endeavour not to place ourselves in situations that may render it our afflicting duty to oppose them.

Every

Every day increasing her repugnance to their union, she looked forward with trembling apprehension to the expiration of the period allotted for their stay in Cumberland; aware that all attempts longer to retard it, after their return to Cornwall, would be unavailing.

"Ah, why," in agony she often asked herself, "why so hasty?—why not abide by the resolution she had formed, of calmly awaiting the consequences that might result from her engagement to lord Lestwithiel?"

Ah, what sufferings had she not incurred!—what future ones might she not have entailed upon herself, by her precipitancy, her wavering, her indiscretion, in each instance!

Had she given herself a little time for reflection—had she allowed pride and ambition to have less influence over her, might it not have struck her that there was as much reason to ascribe the detention of her locket to lingering tenderness, to a

 wish

wish of retaining some memento of having excited an interest in the breast of another, as to any aspiring thought, any ambitious design? Oh yes, it must, it would, and to avoid what was only ideal, she should not then have sacrificed, what at the moment was real, her happiness.

But for the motive to which he suspected it owing, lord Sebergham would have been flattered by the regret she evinced at the idea of quitting Cumberland; but imputing it to the right source, he not only felt hurt, but so alarmed, as to be induced to determine on an expostulation with the baron on the subject, should any longer delay to the celebration of their nuptials be attempted, after their return to Cornwall.

At length the day for setting out on this arrived; fancying herself, in the preceding journey, escaping from something dreaded, very different were the feelings of lady Emmeline on that and the present one. Completely occupied now by one idea, the varying scenes no longer engaged her attention.

attention. But with all her horror of the approaching nuptials, she would infinitely rather they had taken place, than have had them deferred through the cause they were.

Her noble mother scarcely found herself again within her beloved home, ere she was seized with a sickness that was quickly pronounced mortal, and which, according to the prognostic, proved fatal in the course of a few days. The suddenness of this stroke rendered it the heavier; the baron met it with fortitude, but at the same time not without such feelings of regret and sorrow as convinced him his happiness in this life was for ever interrupted; but Emmeline, less able to command herself, for a time sunk beneath it.

Afflicting indeed is the dissolution of such domestic happiness as they enjoyed; long is it ere the agonized heart can recover from the wounds inflicted by the loss of a dear relative—long ere the mourner can view, without a sensation of sickly dis-

 gust,

gust, the scenes in which they were happy together.

At length, assailed by the tears and entreaties of her father, she made an effort to assume an air of resignation; but ere it was confirmed, an affair of moment unexpectedly called him to another part of the kingdom; and at the instant he departed, did also lord Sebergham, whose continuance at the Castle, during this season of affliction, had been sanctioned by the light in which he was now considered by the family, but who, aware that all hope of the celebration of his nuptials must, for the present, be suspended, had no hesitation in quitting it at the time the baron did, being anxious, indeed, to pay a transient visit to London, for the purpose of knowing whether any tidings had reached it of Hardwicke, of whom he had heard nothing since his departure with lord Lestwithiel.

Altered was now the general aspect of Trecothick; its hospitable gates, for the present,

present, closed against visitors—the wonted pastimes of the peasants in the grounds restricted—an air of melancholy the most saddening prevailed over all.

Too much, however, was it in unison with the present feelings of Emmeline not to sooth them. To weep without restraint beneath the soft foliage of the woods, sighing, as if in sympathy with her sorrows—to resign herself to the full enjoyment of the languid stillness that at times prevailed within them—to musingly watch the wandering sunbeams playing over the sparkling surface of some rippling stream, had in it something that at the same time it fed, allayed her anguish.

While thus, in finding the fairy hopes of youth illusive, she was beginning to experience the common lot of humanity, Edmund was undergoing a contrariety of feelings.

He had proceeded some way on his journey, not a little delighted with the opportunities it afforded him of gratifying his

his curiosity, and much pleased with his companion, who, to a considerable portion of natural shrewdness, united a good knowledge of the country, when, in travelling through the Lionnois, they began to be overtaken by night in a wood. The expedition which this circumstance would have induced was impeded by the inequalities of the ground in this direction, and the dangerous projections of the sinewy roots of the old trees. At length, remitting his usual caution for a moment, the horse of Hardwicke, in descending one of these uneven paths, stumbled, and threw his rider with a violence against the knotted trunk of a tree, that for some minutes completely stunned him.

On recovering his senses, he found he had received a severe contusion in his head, and was besides otherwise so much bruised as to be unable to remount directly.

Edmund having bound up his forehead as well as he was able, entreated him to try and make an effort for the purpose; but

but seating himself on a little swell in the ground, he continued to repeat his inability to do so; till at length induced to believe the solicitations of Edmund owing to a selfish motive, he peevishly desired him to leave him to his fate, and no longer, on his account, delay seeking a lodging for the night.

Forgiving his petulance, on account of the sufferings to which he conceived it owing, Edmund calmly replied, he should blush for himself, if capable of so base a desertion; adding, that since unable to make the exertion he wished, he would try whether he could not discover some place of shelter near.

The conscience of Hardwicke smote him as he spoke, so little was he conscious of meriting any attention from him; and as a just punishment for engaging in the dark design against him, he began to view the injury he had met with.

But in vain did Edmund traverse several of the adjacent paths, in hopes of at least discovering

discovering the hut of a woodman; no trace of inhabitation met his view: at length, proceeding farther in one direction than he had before ventured to do, the massive towers of an ancient fabric, seated on a rising lawn of fine verdure, suddenly rose to sight, thrown forward full upon the gaze by the fiery glare imprest upon the sky behind it by the setting sun.

The effect of this gorgeous colouring was heightened by the grey haze that in every other direction was now beginning to steal over the face of creation.

Edmund stopped, uncertain what to feel or what to think. The aspect of the place, and its profound stillness, proclaimed desertion and decay, yet notwithstanding it might be inhabited.

Anxiously he gazed, but no flitting shadow met his view; he listened, but no sound of human voice was heard.

Irresolute he stood for a few minutes. The utter impossibility of now seeking shelter in any other direction then induced him

him to step across the narrow rivulet which divided the lawn from the embosoming forest. As he ascended to the mansion, he heard the drowsy song of the shard-worn beetle in the woods, and more than once the bat flit past him on its leathern wing.

The portal was closed. Knocking against it with his sword, the folding doors instantly gave way, and swinging back with a grating noise, discovered a high-vaulted hall, of considerable extent, terminated by a broad ascent of steps, evidently leading to the interior of the building, and with a narrow staircase at either side, immediately within the entrance, conducting to a gallery above.

The gloom of this place was too well adapted to excite suspicion not to induce Edmund to pause, after advancing a few paces within it. As again he stood irresolute, the doors by which he had entered suddenly slapped to, with a violence that shook the fabric, and occasioned a sound that convinced him if any one was within

it,

it, it must be the means of bringing them to the spot.

Under this idea, he remained motionless for several minutes, when hearing no one, and feeling assured from this that the place was, as its aspect denoted, consigned to decay, he had no longer any hesitation in returning to conduct his companion to its shelter.

Glad as was Hardwicke to hear of any being procured, yet so great was the pain he endured on attempting to rise, from the severity of his bruises, as to be almost deterred from making an effort to reach it.

Encouraged by Edmund, and aware, besides, of the ill consequences likely to result from remaining exposed to the open air all night, he at length forced himself to do so. Edmund gave him an arm to lean on, and with his other disengaged hand led the horses, the bridles of which he had tied together.

Hanging these on a jutting stone at the portal, Edmund supported his companion

up

up the ascent at the bottom of the hall, which having gained, they found themselves in a spacious chamber, but in such a state of ruin as to induce them to seek elsewhere for shelter.

Accordingly, passing through a door at the side, they at length found themselves, after traversing several others of equally deplorable appearance, in an apartment comparatively comfortable.

Here Edmund left his companion for a few minutes, in order to secure the horses, in such a manner as should prevent all fear of their straying, and get the provisions they carried. Having made the sufferer take some refreshment, and particularly a good bumper of *cote roti,* which they had procured at the last stage, he made up a bed, as well as he was able, for him, of the two large cloaks which they were wont to wear in travelling at night; and then, with his sword resting against his knee, threw himself into an old worm-eaten chair he found near one of the windows.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding the fatigue he had gone through, he felt but little inclined to repose; and besides, deemed it but right to be upon the watch, since, notwithstanding the apparent abandonment of the place, there was a possibility that it might not be one of safety.

He had lately but little time for reflection; but now, in this hour of solitude and silence, his thoughts again began to revert to his future prospects, and he sighed to think that ere this, perhaps, his fate was decided, by the unsuccessful result of lord Sebergham's application for him to the king, which, fully confiding in his promise, he doubted not his making. If so, what was to become of his dreams of bliss with the fair heiress of Trecothick? Alas! like every other vision of happiness, he should then be compelled to regard them as delusive; but would she participate in the disappointment? Ah, could he doubt it, after what had passed?—could he press her locket to his lips, and believe the contrary?

trary? Oh no, with a mingled sensation of pain and pleasure, at the idea of her sharing in his regret, he felt he could not.

His impatience to be out of suspense rendered the accident that had occurred doubly distressing to him, from the delay he conceived it not improbable it might occasion.

Distressed and agitated by the thoughts to which he had given way, he strove to think of something else. The solitary place he was in gave scope to the imagination; it seemed to him as if something of mystery was connected with it. He could not help thinking that to some most particular circumstance could alone be owing the desertion of so noble a pile—the perpetra- perhaps, of some deed of darkness—ome horrible crime, appalling to the recollection, within its gloomy walls.

From straining his sight, to penetrate the obscuring gloom of the chamber, he was suddenly attracted to gaze from the window, by the beams of a full-orbed moon, rising majestically,

majestically, with her attending star, above the woods.

He hailed the beauteous planet with a sensation of delight, so cheering was even the partial dispersion of darkness it occasioned. The view it afforded him beyond the window was pleasing; the ground, covered with a soft thick verdure, with clumps of shrubs scattered over it, finely contrasted by the grandeur of the aspiring woods at the other side, descended in gentle inequalities to the margin of a beautiful stream, that, from its direction, he conceived to be the Soame, the pastoral beauties of which had before engaged his attention. As he contemplated it, something flitted past the window, and the next instant he heard a door leading immediately from without, into the apartment opening.

Grasping his sword, he directly started up, and retreated towards the dark nook in which he had contrived the bed of Hardwicke, who, by this time, was buried in a profound sleep, conceiving it but prudent

to see who entered ere he allowed himself to be discovered. The moonlight that streamed in at the door, and windows immediately contiguous to it, permitted him to perceive the tall majestic figure of a man advance into the room. About the middle of it he stopt for an instant, and seemed to cast round him an inquiring look, then was again passing on, when a deep groan from Hardwicke arrested his steps; he paused, listened, again looked round him, then suddenly approaching the spot whence the sound proceeded, discovered the strangers, and instantly started back and fled; Edmund instinctively followed, entreating him to stop, for the purpose, if a person well inclined, of obtaining his services, if ill, of endeavouring to prevent any mischief he might meditate; but in vain, he called—in vain continued to repeat his assurances that he should not have any reason to repent attending to him. At length, after following through a long succession of gloomy chambers, he imagined himself on the

the point of seizing him, when he suddenly vanished from his view.

More than ever persuaded, from his refusing to answer, that there was reason to fear him, Edmund looked narrowly about for the passage by which he could have escaped, and discovered a low door under a staircase.

After two or three violent efforts to open this, it gave way with a suddenness that occasioned him to fall forwards; on recovering himself, he perceived a low descent of steps, and saw that he had fallen over the figure of a human being stretched upon them. As well as he could discern, the size and dress resembled that of the person he was pursuing, and in consequence, under the persuasion of its being him he saw, he stooped to raise him, but started back in horror, on finding he had touched the arm of a skeleton. Uncertain what to think, and equally undecided how to act, for that by this way his pursuit had been eluded he felt confident, and to the prevalent

lent superstition of the times was not an utter stranger, he paused for a moment, when suddenly a light flashed down the wall of the passage before him, and raising his eyes, he beheld the figure he had been following at his side; involuntarily he again started, but the exclamation he was about uttering was prevented, by his being accosted with an entreaty, in the French tongue, to excuse the caution that had been the means of occasioning him so much trouble—" A caution I should certainly have deemed unnecessary, had I earlier had a view of that countenance," continued the stranger, with a benevolent smile brightening over his own.

Edmund, well versed in modern as well as ancient lore, having thanked him for his implied compliment in the same language, proceeded to inform him of the accident to which was owing the circumstance of their meeting under that roof.

" I am happy," resumed the stranger, after attentively listening to him, " that it

is in my power to render you the service you so much require. Your suffering companion shall be conveyed to a place better adapted for him; and whatever further accommodation I can afford, rely on freely commanding."

Edmund again thanked him, not, however, with a perfect feeling of ease; the prostrate skeleton, and still more, the shadow of another man he just at the moment discovered, suspiciously peeping out from a projecting doorway, with the light that had illumined the passage, united to render him uneasy. Convinced, however, that now to evince any thing like distrust could answer no good purpose whatever, so completely was he committed, he endeavoured to assume an air of tranquillity.

The stranger calling to the other by the name of Jacques, he came forward, and, with his light, preceded them to the apartment where Hardwicke had been left, and whom they found in a state of extreme terror, the exclamation of Edmund having awoke

awoke him, and excited a belief of their being in danger.

Edmund, briefly relating what had happened, succeeded so far in calming his apprehensions, as to prevent any opposition to the proposal of removing him to another part of the building. Supported by him and the stranger, with Jacques lighting the way, he gained a distant chamber, in one of the outer towers, furnished with a bed, on which he was immediately placed, and where, from the comparative comfort in which he found himself, and the effects of another large bumper of wine, he soon again sunk to repose.

No farther attendance on him being then requisite for the present, Edmund followed the stranger into an adjoining chamber, containing a table well covered with comfortable fare. Of this Edmund was pressed to partake, with a friendliness that failed not of its due effect upon his feelings; but by this time, the suspicions that would have impeded gratitude were completely sub-

 dued.

dued. The courteous manners of his entertainer, his noble aspect, and the mingled dignity and grace conspicuous in every look and gesture, all conspired to inspire him with confidence, and induce a belief of his being some unfortunate, driven by calamity to seek a refuge within the decaying walls where he had met him, instead of a person lurking within them for evil purposes; for, alas! though not far advanced in his pilgrimage, he but too well knew to what numerous trials man is born.

A shade of care upon his brow well justified this idea—of care, that, more than age, seemed to have changed the hue of his raven locks, and given to his visage a pallid cast.

The fixed earnestness with which Edmund, from time to time, contemplated him, was not unmarked. With a significant smile, as, in his turn, he fastened his dark eyes, keenly penetrating in their expression, on him—"I can well surmise to what your earnest inspection of my features

tures is owing," he said; "but not so readily can you guess, I am aware, the motive that leads to the equally earnest examination of yours. In every look, in every gesture, I trace a resemblance to a noble friend I once had the happiness of possessing in your country—a likeness that grows upon me the more I gaze upon you, and almost inclines me to think you some connexion of his."

"That were easily ascertained, by the knowledge of his name," returned Edmund.

With a profound sigh—"Lestwithiel was his name," he replied; "for, alas! long since has he paid his debt of nature."

Edmund clasped his hands together—"My father!" he exclaimed, in a voice that seemed to issue from his heart.

The stranger started from his seat, and eagerly grasped his arm—"Oh Heavens! is it possible!" he cried. "Yet why this surprise at the discovery, aware as I was of his having left a son—a son whom in vain I

inquired concerning, after the fatal battle that, in the vicinity of Barnet, laid prostrate the hopes of the house of Lancaster? But tell me all; say, did the cause he espoused prove of injury to thee? or does thy noble mother still live to mourn the early dissolvement of their happy union?"

A tear was the reply; for without the most affecting emotions Edmund could not hear mentioned the parents of whom he had been so early deprived; but struggling against those he now experienced, he quickly again unshaded his brow, which he had involuntarily covered, and looking up—"Heaven was kind," he said, with a deep sigh, "in quickly summoning her after her lord, and thus saving her from the anguish she must have felt at witnessing her son in a state of lingering dependence."

The stranger started—"What!" demanded he, "has the resentment of the king proved so implacable? or have you wanted a friend to plead your cause?"

"No, I have not wanted a steady and

ardent

ardent friend; even now I have reason to think there is one making intercession for me; but so great is the wrath of the king against all of my unhappy house, that much I fear its proving unavailing."

Again the stranger betrayed strong emotion—"It may be so," he said; "but should the apprehension be verified, do not, therefore, despair of the restoration of your lineal honours, for if there be faith in man, Edward, to *my suit*, will grant what to others he may perhaps refuse. You look astonished, and no wonder, to hear me, the subject of another kingdom, and a person apparently driven to concealment, pretend to influence with a powerful monarch; But when I explain myself more fully, you will, notwithstanding, I dare say, give credit to my assertion. Ere, however, I attempt entering on this explanation, I should be glad to hear whatever particulars relate to you."

His wish for this was speedily gratified; reseating themselves, the equally agitated

and surprised Edmund briefly detailed all that had occurred since the death of his father, concluding his simple narrative by an acknowledgment of the impatience he felt for the explanation he was promised.

"You shall have it," returned his new friend; "but ere I commence it, would it not be advisable your endeavouring to recruit your spirits by a little repose?"

"Oh impossible! impossible to think of it," answered Edmund, "in such a state of agitation as the present; if, therefore, 'tis not encroaching on your rest, my requiring any need not occasion its being delayed."

"Then it shall not; let Jacques furnish us with another flask of Hermitage, and it shall be given."

Jacques did as required, and thus the promised narrative commenced.

CHAP

CHAP. IX.

'Tis thus that Heav'n its empire does maintain;
It may afflict, but man may not complain.

OTWAY.

"WITHIN these decaying walls, where I now doubtless appear in a suspicious light, I first became sensible of existence. He to whom I was taught to consider I owed the duty of a son, the count Montbrison, was a man of austere temper and retired habits, but more, perhaps, owing to a rankling sense of injustice than to any inherent gloom; for unmerited wrongs are but too apt to affect the temper, and lead us to revenge upon the innocent the offences of the guilty.

"The count was the offspring of a first

 marriage;

marriage; his father, some time after his becoming a widower, conceived a passion for a young lady of illustrious rank in his neighbourhood, but whose friends positively refused allowing her to accede to his addresses, except he consented to entail his estates upon any issue he might have by her; with a clause of reversion in favour of his first-born, or his descendants, should those that might be born of his second marriage fail.

"Madly enamoured, he suffered himself to be persuaded to subscribe to these unjust conditions, rather than relinquish the object of his admiration—an act which operated so strongly on the mind of his injured son, as to occasion him, soon after he had formed an union himself, to break off all further intercourse with his family, and retire to this solitary castle, which, in right of his mother, together with a small estate attached to it, he possessed.

"My mother, in point of disposition, was his exact opposite; mild, gentle, and forgiving,

forgiving, she neither knew how to provoke enmity or retain resentment.

"With a character so diametrically the reverse, nothing, probably, could have induced her to form an union but the compulsive authority of an arbitrary parent. No murmur or complaint, however, escaped her lips; but the uniform expression of her saintlike countenance spoke more forcibly than volumes could have done, the state of her heart.

"A sister, some years younger, shared with me her love. Unfortunate Adelaide! hapless victim of mistaken revenge!—alas! how daily is it proved that one error almost ever leads to another—that one crime committed, and a thousand gigantic ones stalk in its train!

"But a truce to every thing not immediately relevant; so great must be your impatience, I am aware, for the explanation I have promised, that, for the better understanding it, were not the particulars I

 am

am now giving necessary, you should not be fatigued with them.

"This lovely sister, as she grew up, conceived an attachment for the son of a neighbouring gentleman—an attachment most sincerely returned, but which, after having long given it his sanction, the count, her father, always irritable, and ever apt to be offended, suddenly took it in his head to prohibit, from some imaginary cause of offence.

"In vain were remonstrances had recourse to by the friends of each party; he remained inexorable; and finding my mother continued to countenance it, forcibly removed my sister to a convent with which she was unacquainted.

"During this period of tyranny, I was on my travels: amongst other places I visited was Venice; here I had not been long, when my heart became captive to the charms of donna Claudia, the beautiful daughter of a noble Venetian, named Pisani,

Pisani, and who, under the conduct of her aunt, the illustrious sister of the senator Pisani, was allowed to partake of the gaieties of the place.

"But here it is necessary to inform you that the father of count Montbrison was by this time deceased; and that by his second marriage he had left a son, created count d'Beaujalois, who, in process of time, also married, and was left a widower, with one daughter, the apparent heiress of the unjustly alienated inheritance of the elder branch of the family. Her mother being a Venetian lady, occasioned her being frequently at Venice. The many opportunities which, in consequence, she and donna Claudia had of being often in company with each other, caused a friendship, by degrees, to grow between them, which the avowed passion of the young Pisani, donna Claudia's brother, for her, did not tend to lessen.

"But the favourable sentiments which his sister was allowed to cultivate for the

lovely

lovely Laura were in him discouraged. His father entertained other views for him; and the count d'Beaujalois, offended that any one should pretend to object to his alliance, commanded his daughter, on pain of his lasting displeasure, to think no more of him; protesting, that though his father should retract the refusal he had previously given to his wishes, he should never now obtain her hand.

"These were particulars, however, of which I knew nothing, till after I had been some time at Venice.

"Unbroken then in spirit, flushed with youth, and all its flattering hopes, I entered freely into all the pleasures of the place, especially during the joyous season of the carnival, deriving no little amusement, nor inconsiderable share of applause, from the numerous disguises I successfully adopted.

"Soon after this season of general merriment, donna Claudia one day, who, to all the sensibility peculiar to her sex, united

united a lively wit, and the magical sweetness that distinguishes the manners of her native place, said, laughingly, she should like to see me assume yet another character than I had appeared in at the carnival, namely, that of a knight-errant—' And for which,' added she, ' I could give you a better motive than mere amusement.'

' What,' in the same strain I demanded, ' except that of rendering her a service?'

' Or of conferring an obligation on her not to be cancelled,' she replied, ' by rendering it to another.'

" Then suddenly assuming a cast of seriousness, she proceeded to acquaint me of the attachment between her brother and the lady Laura, and the consequences to which it had led. Her father, as a means of trying to break it, had forced the unhappy youth to accompany him to a relative's in Rome, where he kept him almost as a state prisoner; and the count d'Beaujalois, from the same motive, hurried his daughter away to a gloomy castle he had in

in the bosom of the Apennines, where she underwent the same restraint.—'But this is not all,' continued the lovely Claudia; 'by a letter she contrived to have conveyed to me, I find, if not speedily liberated, she is in danger of being forced into the arms of a man whom, exclusive of her attachment to another, she cannot think of without horror. To save her from a fate so dreaded, she implores me, by my friendship for her, and the regard I feel for the happiness of my brother, to endeavour to aid her in escaping from her confinement; but, alas! I fear I shall be unable to do this, except I have succeeded in interesting you in her behalf, to endeavour to do which was the sudden suggestion of despair. Well am I aware of the enmity existing between your respective fathers; but I entertain too noble an opinion of your generosity, to believe you capable of confounding the innocent with the guilty, or suffering any personal motive to prevent an exertion of humanity.'

"Delighted

"Delighted at her favourable sentiments, and the opportunity she thus afforded of strengthening my interest with her, by recommending myself to the friendship of her brother, who, I knew, possessed considerable influence over her, I threw myself at her feet, and in an ecstacy declared 'there was nothing she could command, nothing she could wish, I was not ready to perform.'

"The emergency of the case requiring promptitude, no time was lost in arranging the method of proceeding. As a pilgrim from the shrine of Loretto, it was settled that I should endeavour to gain admission to the residence of my fair cousin, which having once done, no doubt was entertained of my being able to obtain the necessary conference.

"Every thing being arranged, I set out on the adventure; and after traversing a considerable portion of the Apennines, those woody regions in which the imagination is so continually exalted by the ro

mantic grandeur that meets the view, and the sight of those mountains from whence burst so many of the classic streams of Italy, at length reached the gloomy castle of the count d'Beaujalois, scarcely, at a distance, to be distinguished from the rocky height on which it was founded, so discoloured by time were its rifted battlements, and overrun with wild weeds and brambles.

"The character I had assumed, as foreseen, prevented any great difficulty in obtaining access to it; nor, from the freedom she was allowed within its walls, did I find a much greater one in procuring the requisite conference with the lady Laura.

"If previously my view in wishing to serve her was to recommend myself still more to the regard of others, and thus forward my own interests, no sooner did I behold her than I felt, for her own sake alone, there was no danger I would not willingly incur, so truly interesting did she appear.

"Having allowed her to believe I was what

what I pretended, till I conceived we were out of immediate danger of observation, I suddenly produced the letter with which I was entrusted by her friend, mentioning who I was, and the part I had undertaken; and entreating, as soon as possible after the consideration of its contents, an interview, quitted the ramparts, whither I had followed her.

"For this interview I was not long allowed to remain anxious. Suddenly reappearing before me in the court, where I continued loitering, she beckoned me to follow to a distant part of the pile—— But I will not needlessly exhaust your patience, by dwelling on the vigilance we were obliged to practise to prevent detection, or the difficulty found in accomplishing the escape so necessary to save her from misery.

"At length, despite of the numerous obstacles to this, I had the happiness of effecting it. Incessantly on the watch, I at last discovered one of the further out-

posts

posts unguarded one evening; and losing no time in apprizing her of the circumstance, she immediately availed herself of it.

"Where to bend her steps was previously settled: urged by me, she resolved, for the present, on seeking réfuge at the chateau of the count Montbrison, as a place of all others in which her incensed father would never think of seeking for her.

"Though aware of his deep resentment for the injury done him, by the alienation of his rightful inheritance, yet giving him credit for greater integrity and generosity of nature than, alas! it was fatally proved, by subsequent events, he possessed, I had no apprehension that this feeling would ever betray the count into any base or unmanlike conduct, and consequently that there was no danger of my fair cousin, as I styled her, not meeting, beneath his roof, with the protection and tenderness she required. But fearful, notwithstanding, of his being displeased at the part I had

had acted, or rather mistrustful of being allowed to immediately return to the society of my lovely Claudia, should I discover myself, I therefore determined not to do so, and accordingly, in the disguise which had enabled me to aid her in escaping, appeared before him with the fair fugitive.

"Having introduced herself, she briefly told her story, and explained the motive that had led her to him.

"Leaning, at a little distance, against a pillar of the hall in which they were conversing, I anxiously watched his countenance whilst listening to her, and suddenly beheld it flushed with an expression of joy.

"Imputing this to the happy consciousness of possessing the power of shewing her the kindness she required, I felt inexpressible delight at the circumstance; but notwithstanding, still resolved on keeping myself concealed, lest, otherwise, my immediate departure might be prevented.

"From attentively regarding her, his penetrating eyes were suddenly turned

upon

upon me; but penetrating as they were, they failed of piercing through the disguise I wore; shadowed by my pilgrim's hood, and the large flap of my hat, my features were completely obscured from his view.

"As instructed by me, his lovely niece represented me as anxious to regain the way from which I had deviated, for the purpose of serving her. Accordingly no surprise was expressed at the intimation given, of my intending to depart at an early hour the ensuing morning.

"On retiring to the little chamber allotted to me, I could not help feeling a strange sensation at the idea of my being as an absolute stranger beneath the domestic roof; but the reflections excited by the singularity of my situation were soon suspended, through the influence of fatigue. Overpowered by it, I quickly threw myself, dressed as I was, on the bed, in order to be ready, at the first glance of day, to depart, lest a delay in doing so might occasion

casion the discovery I feared, and soon sunk into a profound repose.

"From this I was suddenly roused, by a light flashing on my eyes. Starting up, I beheld the count Montbrison, with a taper in his hand, standing beside the bed.

"My first idea was, that he had discovered me; but of being mistaken in this, I was presently convinced by his manner.

'I am sorry, pilgrim,' he said, 'to disturb your slumbers; but after a little further consultation between the lady Laura and me, we have deemed her removal hence advisable, lest, from the little caution that was used on her arrival, some one of the domestics should betray her. Accordingly, in the course of to-morrow, she proposes departing, under my protection, for Vienna; and that the friend she has suddenly recollected there may be properly prepared for her reception, wishes you to set out directly, and take charge of this casket,' presenting one to me, 'for her.'

"With a kind of stupid stare I received

it from him, so much was I surprised by what I heard. Not knowing why I should discredit it, however, so plausibly was it accounted for, I signified my readiness to do as wished; and in the same disguised tone proceeded to ask the necessary instructions.

"Being received, no further delay occurred; the count himself, with the cautious step of alarm, saw me to a private portal, which was eagerly closed against me the moment I passed over the threshold.

"There was something of hurry, of trepidation, in all he did, that excited an involuntary alarm—a kind of vague suspicion and distrust. Yielding, for a moment, to a presageful feeling, I paused—I lingered, on passing through the portal. The aspect of the pile, methought, was black and ominous; and with difficulty could I prevent myself from again demanding admission to it, and insisting on an interview with the fair fugitive. Ah, in bitterness of soul, how often have I bewailed my resistance to the impulse

pulse that urged me to the measure! but the strange appearance I imagined it would have, still more the detection I conceived it likely to lead to, withheld me from it.

"Slowly I proceeded, almost fancying, at times, I heard mysterious whisperings in the air, when just as I entered a gloomy dingle near the Castle, I was surprised by hearing the hasty tread of many feet following close upon mine, and presently after at beholding several armed men, whose voices quickly discovered to me their belonging to the count.

"They called to me to stop; but their commanding me to do so was unnecessary, so motionless had the surprise occasioned by their unexpected appearance rendered me. But how was this surprise heightened, on finding myself rudely seized, and accused of being a murderer! Led by this accusation to believe something dreadful had happened at the Castle, I would instantly have discovered myself, for the purpose of ascertaining, but was prevented by the vio-

 lence

lence they had recourse to. Tying a bandage over my mouth, they dragged me along, nor in the least relaxed their hold till their entrance to the hall, where the count impatiently awaited their return. My hands being then freed, I speedily restored myself to the power of respiring freely, and was on the point of throwing up the hood which still hung over my face, when the count, in a terrible voice, repeating the accusation they had uttered, prevented me.

'Caitiff!' he exclaimed, 'your meditated flight is stopt! the innocent blood you have shed has not cried unregarded for vengeance! Oh, that beneath my roof you should have thought of commiting so dire a deed! But as yet,' looking round at his vassals, 'you are unacquainted with the particulars of what I accuse him. My dread of his escaping, should pursuit be delayed, prevented me sooner giving them. Know then, that in repairing to my apartment, I was startled by deep groans from the

the chamber where the lovely lady lay who arrived here last night. Instinctively I entered it, and found her weltering in her blood, but with life yet lingering on her lips. Though aghast with horror, I yet involuntarily demanded to whose cruel hands was owing what I saw? and in accents scarce articulate, from approaching death, she just had power to say, the villain's who attended her hither, ere she expired. That he was instigated to the perpetration of the atrocious deed by some other motive than that of merely wishing to deprive her of life, I cannot avoid thinking. Search him, therefore, that I may know whether or not I am right in the surmise.'

"Perceiving them approach to obey his orders, I took the casket from my bosom, which he had so insidiously entrusted to my care, and dropt it at my feet.

'Ha!' he cried, with an air of exulting triumph, 'you see I was right.'

"I drew close to him as he spoke; and

laying one hand impressively on his arm, with the other uncovered my features, and fastened my eyes full upon him.

"Oh, even now methinks I see his start of horror—even still seem to hear the soul-harrowing tone in which he pronounced my name as he sunk upon the pavement.

"In unutterable astonishment it was repeated by the domestics; and in their eagerness to ascertain whether I was indeed their young lord, he lay some minutes neglected.

"Recovering perception, oh, how agonizing were his cries!—how frantic his despair! In frenzied anguish he tore his grey locks, and called upon death to end his misery, forgetful, at the moment, blood-stained as he was, how little he was prepared to meet it.

"Far, however, from leading to a suspicion of the dreadful truth, these frantic agonies had alone the effect of heightening the commiseration of his people for him, by being imputed to his horror at finding me

me to be the assassin of his niece. Two of them, over officious, ere I was discovered, had set out to the next town, for the purpose of procuring the necessary officers of justice to take me in charge, information that again had the effect of throwing the wretched Montbrison into a state of insensibility.

"From this, however, he was speedily recalled; but not through the exertions of his attendants, but the wild shrieks of the countess, calling upon her lost child, her murdered Adelaide.

"Instinctively every one rushed to the chamber whence the shricks proceeded, and which was the same that had been appropriated to the use of the lady Laura.

"But conceive what was felt by all, when, in place of hers, they beheld the disfigured corpse of my sister Adelaide upon the bed, her mother, with dishevelled hair, hanging over her, and she who was supposed to have been murdered leaning,

 uninjured,

uninjured, against a pillar, in silent horror at the contemplation of the scene.

"The count was the first who had power to articulate—'Explain, explain,' he cried, his eyes wildly rolling, his grey hair half bristled up, half lying dank on his fallen temples, through the cold dew of anguish, 'the cause of all this!'

"Lady Laura stepped forward, and beckoning him to follow to another apartment, undertook what he desired.

"She was kneeling, she said, before a picture of our blessed lady, which she had discovered in the chamber, when suddenly her devotions were interrupted by a low rustling sound within an adjoining closet, and presently after a gliding figure entered the room—'But so fair, so lovely,' she added, 'that though awed I was not alarmed. For a moment it seemed, on discovering me, irresolute whether to advance or retreat, then drawing nearer—"Lady," it said, in a gentle voice, "this apparent intrusion

intrusion I am sure you'll forgive, when you learn who I am."

'Rising from my kneeling posture, I bowed, in confirmation of this assurance; and losing the kind of superstitious awe that had crept over me at her first appearance, motioned the lovely stranger to take a seat upon the couch, whilst she entered upon the explanation implied by her words.

'This,' continued lady Laura, 'was briefly given; she informed me of being the daughter of the count Montbrison—of the motive that led him to separate her from her beloved mother—of her having, as, alas! she then thought it, had the good fortune to effect her escape from the convent in which he had placed her—and of her gaining access to her former chamber, the one I found I was in, by means of a secret passage, under the hope of obtaining an opportunity of conversing with her mother, and consulting whither she should retire, to be freed from further persecution, relative to her attachment; conclud-

ing her recital by expressing her hope that I would not betray her.

'I soon succeeded in calming all fears on that head; and having informed her who I was, and to what was owing my being put in possession of her chamber, undertook endeavouring to bring the countess to her. She instructed me how to find her chamber; but ere I left her, perceiving her nearly overpowered by fatigue and agitation, I prevailed on her to lie down, in order to rest herself.

'The remoteness of the countess's apartment from hers rendered it a difficult matter for me to find it, although I had a light with me. At length, however, I discovered it; and having, as cautiously as possible, revealed the information I had to give, we were about quitting it, when a confused noise below stairs induced the countess to draw back, and decide on not venturing from it, lest of being surprised, till satisfied the family had retired to repose.

'Most

'Most anxiously she watched for some notification of this; her patience at length completely exhausted, she resolved on no longer delaying—'My child sleeps,' she cried, in a low voice, on entering the chamber, in consequence of hearing no movement within it; laying down the light, she softly approached the bed, and put her head within the curtains; but oh, blessed saints!' proceeded the shuddering Laura, 'how was I alarmed—how chilled with horror, by the wild shriek she uttered at the instant, and the terrible sight which her drawing back the curtains the next moment, with frantic haste, revealed to me!

'Doubtless, while expecting us, my unhappy cousin was surprised by sleep, and thus rendered an unresisting victim to her cruel murderer. Whoever he be, surely the severest vengeance of Heaven must overtake him, for his inhuman destruction of so fair, so innocent a being.'

"Instinctively I had followed the count, and at this observation saw a savage fury

 kindle

kindle in his eyes, that made me involuntarily throw myself between him and the unsuspicious Laura: for an instant he continued to regard her with a terrible expression of countenance, then suddenly seizing my arm, he drew me to another apartment; here, sinking at my feet, he bathed them with torrents of tears.

'Pity my grey hairs,' he cried; 'pity me for the wrongs which led to the perpetration of the crime I have committed. Had a father not proved unjust, I should not now be criminal. Rankling with a sense of unmerited injury, I could not think there was an opportunity of recovering the inheritance I had a right to, without determining to avail myself of it; but for wishing to make another appear guilty of the crime I meditated, I confess myself properly punished by what has happened. Still, however, am I at a loss to account for this; how you came to be the guide of lady Laura hither, and why in disguise, are circumstances that appear to me inexplicable.

plicable. This is no time, however, for explanation; we stand upon the brink of ruin and ignominy, and nothing can save us from being precipitated into the abyss but your immediate flight. In a few minutes the officers of justice will be here, and I must either resign you or myself into their hands. Oh, in mercy, save me from being reduced to so dreadful an alternative! if not in compassion to me, at least to your unfortunate mother! The distraction of her senses prevented her recognising you; should you fly, therefore, she may be misled as to the real cause of the fatal catastrophe—should you remain, it will be impossible; and thus will her sufferings be wrought to madness, by her being compelled to ascribe the murder of her daughter either to the hand of her husband or her son.'

"Merciful powers, what a proposition! and what were not the feelings of resentment, of indignation, it excited! To give up all!—incur the imputation of murder!—

der!—relinquish the advantages attendant on unblemished reputation! But ah, at what a price was I to retain my right to these? By the ignominious death of an aged parent!—by the wild anguish of a beloved mother, to see brought to the scaffold the father of her child, for the assassination of that child!

"My resolution faltered beneath such terrible reflections; and rather than entail upon myself the horror they occasioned, I consented to become a wanderer—an outcast—an exile from my native country—a proscribed being, whom every one must abhor—every one must shun.

"The count would have thanked me for my yielding to his supplications; but alike I shrunk from his acknowledgments and embrace, for the name alone he bore was all that I now loved or honoured.

"The agonizing moment of flight was rendered still more painful, by the obtruding idea of my lost Claudia, for lost I now knew she was for ever to me.

"For

"For an instant I meditated seeking her again, for the purpose of reposing in her gentle bosom the torturing secrets of mine, and thus ensuring to myself the melancholy consolation of thinking I should be remembered with tender esteem by her.

"But when for this, I reflected, I must expose to detestation him I called father, perhaps to danger, I checked the impulse that urged me to her feet, and resolved to bear, without a further struggle, my fate.

"That this was a severe one, I believe you will allow: as if to be compelled to relinquish for ever the fond idea of possessing her I loved was not sufficient, I had the additional anguish of thinking I should be considered an object of detestation by her; for so strong were appearances against me, I had not a doubt of being considered by her friend as her intended assassin.

"In the despair excited by the idea, more than once was I on the point of retracing my steps, for the purpose of vindicating myself from the dreadful imputa-

tion;

tion; but was still checked by the reflection of the additional misery that would be occasioned to my mother, by the explanation that must then ensue.

"Yielding to this reflection, I continued to wander still farther from my native home, till at length I found myself at Calais. The sight of the sea induced me to form the resolution of immediately crossing over to the opposite kingdom, where I conceived I should be freed from the necessity of practising the unpleasant precautions I was compelled to use in this.

"But notwithstanding these, my steps were marked. An unprincipled wretch, belonging to the count Montbrison, had contrived to overhear what passed between his lord and me, after the explanation of lady Laura, and with a hope of being able to take advantage of the dreadful predicament in which I was placed, to despoil me of whatever I retained, followed me, in disguise, from the Castle.

"But till after my arrival in England, an

an opportunity for the accomplishment of his base intent did not occur. No longer then on my guard, I thought not, as usual, of barricading myself in at night; accordingly, putting up at the inn to which I repaired on landing, he found it an easy matter to enter my chamber while I slept, and had just succeeded in rifling my pockets, when, owing to the noise he made in doing so, I woke, and at the same instant recognised him, and arrested his flight.

"Finding himself detected, he became desperate, and retaining his prize, called aloud for assistance. The people of the inn came rushing into the chamber at his call; and to them he accused me not merely of the crime he himself had just committed, but also of an atrocious murder in my own country, for which I was obliged to fly it—'And which, if he can look me steadily in the face,' he added, 'and deny, I will suffer myself to be treated as the guilty person.'

"There

"There is a degree of temerity, in the contemplation of which indignation is lost in surprise; such was the case in this instance; in astonishment at his hardiness, my hands relaxed their hold, and I fell back a few paces, in order to have a better opportunity of gazing at him.

"The vulgar are seldom subtle in their discernment; by the inmates of the house, the sudden calmness of my manner was construed into the confusion of conscious guilt, and in consequence, without redress or restitution, I was instantly compelled to leave it.

"Proudly scornful, I slowly proceeded, till I came to the foot of a tremendous cliff, when throwing myself on the ground, I began to ponder on my situation: the feelings excited by the review were not endurable; wronged, injured, defamed, on every side, what but misery, abject misery, awaited me? confounding all with one, I began to conceive a sudden hatred to my species; involuntarily I started on my feet

—my

—my thoughts grew wild, and as I bent over the waves, I felt myself smile, as if the design I meditated would be the means of accomplishing some great revenge on others.

" Still it was but a vague design, when suddenly I felt my arm grasped, and looking up, beheld a stranger of a noble mien beside me; but on the majesty of his air —on the winning sweetness of his looks, I need not descant, when I tell you it was your father. Business of import had called him to Dover, and at the hotel whither I repaired, he also had taken up his abode.

' Stranger,' he said, ' led by your countenance to discredit the allegations made against you, I have followed you from the inn; but whether mistaken or not, be but candid with me, and rely on my proving your friend.'

" In the irritable, the anguished state of mind I was in, the slightest indignity would probably have led to fatal consequences; but at this gentleness, this unexpected

offer

offer of friendship—the assurance it afforded of not being an utter outcast—a wretch who might resign the burthen of existence, without being certain of even a resting-place, my feelings underwent a sudden change—every feature became convulsed with emotion, and a torrent of tears gushed from me.

"Recovering myself, in the fulness of my labouring heart, I unbosomed it to your noble father; he listened to my story with commiseration and wonder, so strange, so singular, did it appear.

"When concluded—'From this moment,' said he, 'strive to forget you ever knew any other country than this. The interest excited by your misfortunes will make me exert myself to reconcile you to the adoption of it.'

"Generous Lestwithiel, how soothing were thy promises!—how consolatory was thy converse! Ah, how feelingly didst thou endeavour to make amends for the wrongs of fortune!

"He

"He would have had me become an inmate at his Castle in Cornwall; but still restless and perturbed, I was not able immediately to bear the idea of the restraint which must be submitted to in the calm of domestic life.

"Delightful calm, how soon and fatally were you interrupted by the horrid clang of war's denouncing trumpet! The dreadful storm, long gathering over England, was now beginning to burst in civil broils. In such conflicts your father could not remain tranquil; and under his banner I enlisted in the cause of Henry, persuaded, from his espousing it, that it must be the just one.

"I could not enjoy the high distinction his notice conferred on me without obtaining that of others, in particular of the royal Henry and his consort, by the former of whom, in process of time, I was knighted, by the name of sir Roland Roussillon.

"I am now hastening to the adventure that

that may yet prove the means of enabling me to serve you, should it be your destiny to need that service——But, hark! was not that a groan? I much fear your companion is worse."

Both started up as he spoke, and hasted to the adjoining room, where they found Hardwicke awake, but in a state of extreme agitation and pain.

Frightful dreams had terrified him, and so strengthened his previously awakened remorse, as to fill him with anguish for the plot he had entered into against Edmund.

"Oh, let me be assured I see you again!" he cried, laying his hot, burning hand on his, the moment he beheld him at the bed-side; "for I dreamt that you were killed in the fatal forest where I am sure I have received my death; and that I was consigned to everlasting despair, in consequence of being deprived, by the catastrophe, of the power of making atonement to you for my conduct."

"To me!" said Edmund, bending over him

him with mild compassion. "Ah, my poor Hardwicke, that were a dream indeed! for what atonement do you owe me?"

"Ah, how unsuspicious does goodness render us!" cried the sufferer, meeting, with tearful emotion, the beaming eyes of the noble youth. "But let a priest be sent for, that I may not have the misery of thinking I die unabsolved, for, if I feel aright, my last moments are not far distant; but lest he should not arrive in time, let me not delay," still addressing Edmund, "confessing all that relates to you."

Sir Roland, who had some knowledge of physic perceived symptoms, as he spoke, that induced him to attend immediately to his request, by directly dispatching Jacques to a neighbouring monastery for one of the holy fathers; then returning to the bedside, he entreated the sufferer, in a soothing voice, to try and compose himself, that if any thing lay heavy at his heart, he might better be able to communicate it.

"Oh,

"Oh, like a ponderous weight of lead, lies heavy on my heart the crime I meditated against this dear youth!" again looking up at Edmund; "but I see he thinks me raving; alas! too soon will he be obliged to believe the reverse!"

"Whatever he may think," said the collected sir Roland, who, from his earnestness, began to imagine there was indeed something wrong to disclose, "I am sure he cannot object to listen to any thing you wish to reveal."

"Certainly not," said Edmund; "collect yourself, therefore, my dear Hardwicke, for I am [illegible] attention to you."

Hardwicke having a little raised himself on his pillow, and being recruited by a cordial, administered by sir Roland, briefly related all that is already known, and infinitely more than lord Sebergham thought he knew, for his confidence in him was but partial; but Hardwicke, shrewd and penetrating, by listening in one place, watching in another, and surmising in a third,

third, had contrived to obtain a pretty good knowledge of his secrets, at least of those that immediately related to Edmund.

To describe what Edmund felt, while listening to him, were impossible. Now unable to credit his statement, nothing but the state he saw him in, restrained him from giving vent to the bursting indignation he felt at his imagined falsehood—now forced to believe it, he was ready, with uplifted hands, to appeal to Heaven, and the spirit of his departed friend, against the monstrous baseness it disclosed.

"Oh, if what you have related be true," he cried [illegible], on Hardwicke [illegible], "how may I ever trust in man again!"

"If!" repeated Hardwicke, in a tone of reproach; "oh, for your own sake, I conjure you not to persist in doubting it, since to discredit it would be to lead you to throw yourself again into the power of lord Sebergham. You know his hand and signet; examine this," drawing a letter from his bosom, and presenting it to him, "and

"and your ill-placed faith in his truth must, I should conceive, be vanquished."

Edmund eagerly took it, and saw it was indeed superscribed in the hand of lord Sebergham, and sealed with his signet. The direction was to the brother of Hardwicke, the steward of his Castle on the Rhone, and the contents as follow:—

"This letter, of which his brother Arnaud Hardwicke, our trusty vassal, will be the bearer, is to be the warrant of Gautier Hardwicke, for detaining and confining, within one of the dungeons of the Castle we ha[illegible]ted to his care, the person of a youth who will accompany his said brother, and who is commissioned by us to give him any instructions he may deem it necessary to require for his conduct to him. According to the manner in which he executes these our commands, his zeal in our service will be judged of, and rewarded by, "SEBERGHAM."

END OF VOL. I.

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